EVERYDAY PHRASES EXPLAINED

WITH THEIR MEANINGS & ORIGINS

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EVERYDAY PHRASES EXPLAINED

A COLLECTION OF CURIOUS WORDS AND PHRASES IN POPULAR USE WITH THEIR MEANINGS AND ORIGINS

LONDON
C. ARTHUR PEARSON, LIMITED
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1913

PREFACE

At the present day, when the contents of the average newspaper cover almost every conceivable subject, words and phrases are constantly recurring which the average man does not understand. As any attempt to "hunt up" the meaning of such phrases would entail a search through cumbersome encyclopædias and dictionaries not always on the parlour bookshelf, the reader generally allows them to slip by unexplained.

The present little volume is the outcome of a literary competition entitled "Knowledge Tests," which started in *Pearson's Weekly* about two years ago. The object of this competition was to give readers an opportunity of discovering for themselves the meaning of out-of-the-way words and sayings which pass from mouth to mouth almost daily with their meanings unchallenged. The competition at once became popular, and since its commencement many appreciative letters have been received, recommending its publication in book form.

The present volume can thus boast that its appearance is due to the repeatedly expressed

wishes of the public. In every instance the words and phrases selected have been taken from a morning newspaper. The explanations have been compiled from the best available authorities and rendered into the simplest English that their subjects will permit. In some instances, where the origin of a word or idiom is at all doubtful, and where different explanations are offered by reference books, the meanings have been chosen which are most in vogue at the present day. In some cases the old meaning has been given in addition to the new one which has taken its place. A few terms, such as "Federation Ticket," have sprung into existence in the present generation and are not to be found in any encyclopædic dictionary; whilst others, such as "the Pipes of Pan," originate from the poetical mythology of ancient Greece. The utmost pains have been taken to make the volume clear, simple, and accurate, in order that it may be of service to everybody.

EVERYDAY PHRASES EXPLAINED

Acts of Sabotage.—The word *Sabotage* is derived from the French *sabot*, a shoe, hence meaning to kick violently. Acts of Sabotage indicate wilful destruction of property by strikers or rebels, such as the smashing of windows, pulling down of sheds, buildings, etc., to compel by fear a surrender to their demands.

Propaganda.—The name of a college and also of a congregation in Rome, the object of which is to spread the Roman Catholic Religion. In modern times the word is used in connection with any society or institution, implying the spreading abroad, by speeches and literature, information about some scheme or idea.

Dictator.—A name given to the special magistrate appointed in days of peril to rule the city of Rome. It is seldom used in so exact a sense nowadays, but is loosely applied to any person temporarily invested with authority. A director, a chairman, a football referee, may be called a dictator. The word is now applied to " any person temporarily invested with power."

The Veto Conference.—A conference is the name of an assembly of people met together for the purpose of extending, modifying, or reconstructing a matter of public importance. The Veto Conference was called for the purpose of finding a way in which the Veto, or power to forbid, exercised by the Lords on the legislation of the House of Commons, could be modified.

Generating Station.—To generate is to create something, such as heat, gas, etc.; but as used in the above phrase it means to create electricity. A generating station is a building containing the dynamos and other machinery for producing electricity for any big undertaking, such as a tramway system or street lighting.

A ten-inch Gun of 45 Calibres.—"Calibre means the diameter of the bore, or passage in the barrel, of a gun; 45 calibres means that the length of the gun is forty-five times the diameter of the bore, so that a gun of 45 calibres with a bore 10 inches in diameter is thirty-seven feet six inches long."

Hangar.—"Hangar" is a word from the French meaning a shed for the accommodation of vehicles of any kind. The old hangars of France were sheds "suspended," or partly "hung" or built out from, walls of houses or gardens. Since the great development of aeronautics, however, the word has been

practically restricted to meaning a shed for the housing of airships.

Cause Célèbre.—A " Cause Célèbre " is an action in civil or criminal law of such importance or notoriety as to become more or less historical. Any trial of a criminal which attracts great public interest, and is referred to for some years afterwards, in conversation or literature—such as the Tichborne Case, or the Dreyfus Case—is a Cause Célèbre.

Contango.—" Contango " is the interest, varying with money-market conditions, charged at the fortnightly Stock Exchange settlements to speculators, who do not wish to buy stocks or shares outright, but to postpone their liability while retaining their rights over the stocks.

Pairing (in Parliament).—When an M.P., say, a Unionist, wishes to be absent from the House during a sitting, or longer, he finds a Liberal member who wishes to do the same, and they agree to be away exactly the same time, so that when a bill, or an amendment to a bill, is put to the vote, neither side will suffer during a division.

The Fourth Estate.—" The Fourth Estate " is the Press. Theoretically the realm consists of three estates—" Lords, Clergy, and Commons " ; but in 1780 Edmund Burke said in the Commons that there was in the Reporters' Gallery an estate

more powerful than any of these. Thenceforth the Press became known as the Fourth Estate.

Chassis.—The word "Chassis" is from the French, and is pronounced "shass-ee." A glass case containing relics of a saint is called a chassis in France. But in England, when we hear people speaking of a chassis, they are referring to the frame, wheels, and mechanism of a motor-car, that is, to a complete automobile minus the body, or tonneau, as it is sometimes called.

Devolution.—In philosophy devolution is the reverse of evolution—declining or going back, instead of developing or going forward. In politics "devolution" is the policy of creating local Parliaments for the four divisions of the United Kingdom, for the management of local as distinct from Imperial affairs.

The Barring Clause (in Music-hall Engagements).—When an artiste is engaged at a certain music-hall, a clause is inserted in the contract to prevent his appearing at rival halls within a specified radius, the management contending that it would prejudice their drawing powers and that the receipts would suffer if the area were not thus defined.

Belted Earl.—From Saxon times down to 1615, a newly made Earl was invested with his dignity by the girding or "belting" on of his sword.

This belting was then declared unnecessary, and, later, was dispensed with by a clause in the patent, until to-day it is only recalled by the phrase itself.

Pylon.—There are two meanings. It originally signified the building on either side of the entrance to an Egyptian temple. The modern meaning of Pylon is the erection, with flag on top, which, on aviation grounds, marks out the course, outside of which aviators must keep during competitions.

Yellow Press.—This term was originally applied to the ultra-sensational class of American, and particularly New York journals, which were printed on paper of a yellow tint. This description, or nickname, has now been extended to all journals of an unscrupulously sensational type.

The Lower House of Convocation.—The Lower House of Convocation is a body of churchmen meeting at intervals to discuss Church affairs. Convocation is divided into two provincial synods, Canterbury and York, each divided again into the "Upper House," consisting of Archbishop and Bishops, and the "Lower House," consisting of Deans, Archdeacons, and Proctors.

Infra Dig.—*Infra Dig.*, or, to give it in full, *Infra Dignitatem*, is a Latin phrase meaning "against dignity." If a person does or says something which lowers him in the eyes of his acquain-

tances, his behaviour is called *infra dig.* A titled lady, for instance, must not bow to her greengrocer in public because her friends would think it so very *infra dig.*

Grand Jury.—A Grand Jury is distinguished from other juries in that it does not try cases. Its function is to sift, or examine cases, and decide whether they are worth trying. Only the evidence *against* the prisoner is considered, and if the Grand Jury think it sufficient to justify a trial, the case is then tried before a Petty Jury.

Proportional Representation. — Proportional Representation means that on elected bodies all shades of opinion shall be represented in proportion to their numbers among the electors.

Molly Maguires.—" Molly Maguires " is the name applied by its opponents to the Ancient Order of Hibernians, who are supposed to control the present Irish Nationalist Party. It was formerly the name of a secret society in Ireland, primarily intended, it is understood, to protect a widow named Molly Maguire from evictors.

The Block System.—The Block System is a system of controlling trains so as to prevent collisions. The line is divided into sections about a mile in length, controlled at each end by signalmen. No train is allowed to enter a section until the preceding train has passed out of it.

Clearing House.—The Clearing House is an establishment to which certain similar businesses subscribe, and in which their respective claims against each other are sorted. Business firms at the close of the week or month often owe each other sums of money. Suppose, for instance, Smith owes Jones £500, but Jones owes Smith £400. The clearing house strikes the "balance," i.e. £100 owed to Jones by Smith. Much trouble is avoided, notably in the banking and railway worlds, by this system of striking credit or debit balances for each bank or railway against others.

Lynch Law.—The name "Lynch" was that of a United States planter of the eighteenth century. Charles Lynch, of Virginia, undertook to support the Government of his region and to protect society by punishing with stripes or banishment all lawless persons. The term "Lynch Law" is used to-day to describe any rough administration of justice by a mob, without proper trial by judge, counsel, and witnesses.

Most Favoured Nation.—The nations who impose a tariff, or charge, on imports have what may be termed a "sliding scale" of classes into which the foreign countries are placed. The one against which is imposed the lowest scale of import duties is naturally the "most favoured." Hence the phrase.

Habeas Corpus.—"Habeas Corpus," Latin for "You have the body," is the name of a famous Parliamentary Act which came into force in the year 1679. It limits the time between the apprehension of a supposed criminal and his trial, and renders it impossible for any sovereign to keep individuals in prison at his pleasure. Under "habeas corpus" a prisoner must be brought before a judge and the cause of his detention stated and investigated.

Mare's Nest.—Mare's Nest means something ridiculously absurd, a tale about any person or thing which on investigation proves to be absolutely untrue and foolish.

Legal Fiction.—Some of our English laws are very ancient, and to adapt these laws to the changed conditions of modern life, legal administrators have occasionally to assume the existence of a fact which is really non-existent, or which cannot be legally proved. This is known as a Legal Fiction.

Catching a Tartar.—In the Middle Ages the Tartars of Tartary were associated with terrorism and Tartarus, the bottomless pit, and the word tartar was adopted to signify an irritable person. Catching a Tartar is a term applied to cases where one antagonist, having apparently captured another, is overpowered and gets the worst of

the encounter. A husband who is henpecked, or under the thumb of his wife, is described as having caught a tartar.

Constitutional Government.—A "Constitution" is that which is made up of several parts, and which together forms one body or object that depends upon them for its existence. The constitution of a man, for instance, is not only his flesh and muscle, but all his vital organs. A Constitutional Government, consequently, is one carried out by the combined action of the various "Estates of the Realm" working together, and not by the autocratic decision of an "absolute" monarch.

Sine Qua Non.—*Sine qua non* is a Latin phrase which, literally translated, means "without which, not." It signifies that the truth of a fact depends absolutely upon the presence of one or more other facts. Thus, the *sine qua non* of business is promptness, without (*sine*) which (*qua*) business is not (*non*) perfect.

Devil's Advocate.—"Devil's Advocate" is derived from the practice in the Roman Catholic Church of having an accuser, called the *Advocatus Diaboli*, to oppose any proposal to canonize some saintly person. Hence it is used to describe mock accusers, or those who seriously and maliciously criticize another.

Trust (Commercial Sense).—"Trust" is the

name applied, chiefly in America, to an amalgamation of business firms dealing in the same materials into one large company whose object is to obtain a monopoly, and thus control selling prices. The trusts claim that their trading methods are to the advantage of the public. But, on the other hand, they stifle healthy competition.

The Iron Law of Wages.—"The Iron Law of Wages" is a theory that the average rate of wages in a country is determined by the number of wage-earners, on the ground that only a certain proportion of capital is available for wages, and that a variation in numbers alters the rate of payment.

An Accessory after the Fact.—An "Accessory after the Fact" is an accomplice who, though not actually participating in a crime, has acquired subsequent knowledge of it. It is the duty of every citizen to notify the police should he possess knowledge of any crime or any criminal engaging the attention of the law. An accessory after the fact, instead of denouncing the criminal, helps him to conceal the deed or escape from justice.

Back-stairs Influence.—Particular parasites of the great were formerly admitted to their patron's closet by a private way, thus avoiding the publicity of the reception-room. Back-stairs influence thus became synonymous for secret influence exercised

over public men by obscure informers or wire-pullers for their own private ends.

Hobson's Choice.—Hobson was a noted carrier in Cambridge. He would only let out his horses and coaches for hire in rotation, refusing to allow his customers to choose. The horse which stood nearest the stable door was the one a customer was compelled to take. Thus it became a proverb, when anything was forced upon one, to say, "Hobson's choice."

Liberal-Unionist.—"Liberal-Unionist" is the description originally claimed by those Liberals who followed Lord Hartington in opposing Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill in 1886. They claimed to be Liberal in politics, but opposed to the abolition of the Act of Union.

The Steward of the Chiltern Hundreds.—Chiltern Hundreds is the name of a hilly district in Buckinghamshire. The Steward of the Chiltern Hundreds is a Crown officer originally appointed to protect the people of Buckinghamshire against the Chiltern robbers. At the present day it is a kind of political refuge. A member of Parliament applies for the stewardship, now a sinecure when he wishes to vacate his seat, for he can resign only by accepting a Crown office.

Laissez-Faire.—*Laissez-Faire* is a French term adopted by us to mean a mental attitude entirely

devoid of disturbing worry, exhibiting itself physically in a deportment of exceedingly easy complacency. It applies particularly to society where ladies and gentlemen acquire *laissez-faire* to overcome embarrassment and irritation.

Pocket Borough.—Pocket boroughs were small constituencies for which members were returned to Parliament either by nomination of the principal proprietor, by his indirect influence, or by regularly manipulated bribery and intimidation. These boroughs were said to be " in the pocket " of the patron, a member of a private family of influence. They were abolished by the Reform Bill of 1832.

Limited Liability Company.—A Limited Liability Company is a concern owned by a number of proprietors—collectively called the " company." They subscribe its capital in portions, or " shares," and are " shareholders." Each, whatever debts the " company " incurs, is liable only for the total amount of his shares; hence the term " limited liability."

Returning Officer.—The Returning Officer is the official who receives the writ commanding an election. He fixes nomination and polling days, receives nominations, and—in the case of a contest—superintends the counting of the votes, announces the successful candidate, and

"returns" the writ with the result endorsed upon it.

Little Englanders.—This is generally used as a term of reproach, and is applied to those who are opposed to a policy of aggressive Imperialism, schemes of military adventure, and excessive expenditure on armaments.

Debenture.—When a company wishes to extend its business, without increasing its capital, it can borrow money on "Debentures," which are certificates, or written promises, under the seal of the company, to repay the money lent with interest. Debenture holders are not shareholders, but merely creditors of the company.

To be Elected to Parliament by a Minority Vote.—A person is elected to Parliament by a Minority Vote when he does not represent the views of the majority who vote, their votes having been divided among two or more candidates holding views opposed to his. It occurs, perhaps, most frequently in a "three-cornered fight"—i.e. when a parliamentary seat is contested by three candidates of different political views.

Taking Silk.—A junior barrister, when he becomes a King's Counsel (or Leader), changes his ordinary barrister's robe of "stuff" for one made of silk. His preferment has thus come to be described as taking silk. The Crown has first

call upon his services, and he cannot be engaged in any case alone, that is, without a "Junior."

Eating his Dinners.—Before a man can become a barrister he must reside at one of the Inns of Court for a certain period. His residence need not be actual, but is reckoned by the number of dinners attended at the Inn. A barrister in-the-making, while passing through this formal ceremony, is described as "eating his dinners."

The Rule of Three.—Rule of Three is the name of a method of calculation in mathematics, and denotes the science of finding an unknown quantity when the unknown quantity bears a known relation to three given quantities. For instance, "as eight is to four so is twelve to —— the unknown quantity to be calculated. The word "Proportion" is used by modern writers in place of the above phrase.

Bucket Shop.—Bucket shop is the slang name for an "outside" broker's office. The proprietor is not under the authority of the Stock Exchange, and there is often more than a suspicion that the business consists of gambling on market fluctuations rather than legitimate buying and selling shares on behalf of clients.

Platonic Friendship.—Platonic friendship really means a purely spiritual affection between the opposite sexes, having regard only to mental

excellence and high personal worth. It is derived from the Greek philosopher Plato, who believed in the higher and more spiritual form of love.

Ipso Facto.—*Ipso facto* is Latin, meaning "by this same fact." It was first used by philosophers to explain that a quality not considered in the definition of a thing follows inseparably from it. An Anarchist is *ipso facto* a rebel since he acknowledges no established authority; yet a definition of an anarchist would not state this.

Tontine Bonus.—A Tontine loan is a method of borrowing money invented by Tonti, an Italian banker about the year 1653. The members of a Tontine are those who subscribe to the loan. The borrower pays interest annually. When a member dies, his interest is distributed as a bonus among the survivors. The last survivor receives the whole interest. When he dies the capital falls to the borrower.

Sinking Fund.—A Sinking Fund is a portion of the income or profits allocated by a Government, corporation, company, or individual, at certain periods, towards the gradual payment of a debt. Thus, by degrees, the encumbrance is reduced or "sunk." Hence the adoption of this phrase. It has proved most successful in private business. In Government affairs the Sinking Fund raised

to pay off the National Debt in the past proved a failure, another debt being incurred while wiping out the former.

Freedom of the City.—A city often recognizes distinguished services, rendered either to itself or to the whole country, by making the person a Freeman of the City. This really means gratuitous admission to the rights of citizenship, but does not, however, carry with it voting powers.

Privy Councillor.—Privy Councillors are distinguished persons appointed by the Sovereign to assist him in an advisory capacity. They are under oath to keep the King's counsel secret, and are entitled to be addressed as "Right Honourable." The accession and demise of the Sovereign are proclaimed by them.

Parthian Shot.—A Parthian Shot is usually a telling remark delivered when leaving by one who is apparently beaten in argument. The Parthians, an ancient Asiatic race, were magnificent horsemen and bowmen. In warfare they fled before opponents, apparently routed, but in retreating turned in their saddles and shot with deadly accuracy.

Marriage Settlement.—A Marriage Settlement is a legal document, the purpose of which is to tie up certain property, real or personal, so that the income may go to either the husband or wife, as

the document may provide, during their lives, and after their death to any children of the marriage.

Undistributed Middle.—This is a logical name for a fallacious argument of the following type: All moths are insects; some insects are poisonous; therefore moths are poisonous. "Insects" is the connecting or "middle" term, but is undistributed, or incomplete, because the statements are both about some, not all, insects, wherein lies the fallacy.

Attic Salt.—In this phrase "salt" is the symbol of wit, refined and pungent. It is also associated metaphorically with wit, because salt, like smart repartee, brings water to the eyes. "Attic" adds the idea of intellectual brilliance, for Athens, the chief city of Attica, was the "eye of Greece," and the centre of its art and literature. "Attic salt," therefore, stands for refined wit of an intellectual type.

Reading the Riot Act.—When assemblies of twelve or more persons in a public place give indication of "riot," the proclamation from the Riot Act, passed in the reign of George I, commanding the crowd to disperse, is read. Non-compliance within one hour renders offenders liable to prosecution for felony, and soldiers may be requisitioned to assist the police.

Red Tape.—This term originates from the practice of tying up important official documents with "red tape" to keep them in order. It is now often applied as a term of reproach to the too rigid adherence to strict rules, in cases where common sense dictates speedy action without regard to all the formalities of office.

Bumbledom.—"Bumble," the fat and officious beadle in Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, is responsible for the addition of the word "Bumbledom" to the English language. The expression describes the pompous self-importance concealing inefficiency which often characterizes societies, vestries, and parochial assemblies.

Pyrrhic Victory.—Pyrrhic victory means that a man who has beaten his enemy in a fight or quarrel has suffered such severe loss in another manner as to make his victory almost as bad as a defeat. For example, the man who takes a case to law and wins after almost ruining himself by expensive litigation, secures a "Pyrrhic victory." The phrase is derived from Pyrrhus, who beat the Romans in several battles, but lost nearly all his men in the conflict.

Difference between Socialism and Anarchism.—The difference between Socialism and Anarchism is that Socialism is a system which aims at co-operation and social equality for the common good,

whereas Anarchism is "literally" devoid of system, and aims at the overthrow of established monarchy by violence and establishing in its place a state of society in which every man acts for himself as he thinks fit.

The Missing Link.—Darwin propounded the theory that mankind came into existence from some lower form of creature not yet discovered in fossil remains, and that monkeys are offspring of the same parent. This imaginary being is "the missing link," which, if found, would prove the theory to be correct.

Law of Entail.—This law makes it possible for property to be kept in one family for successive generations. A man whose property is entailed cannot sell or otherwise dispose of it. At his death it passes to his heir or next-of-kin. The word is now more loosely used. Strict entails have become obsolete, and it now indicates the giving of property to one or two during life.

Father of the Chapel.—"Chapel," in printers' parlance, means "workshop," originating from the fact that early printing-presses were placed in chapels attached to abbeys. "Father of the Chapel" was the name given to the chairman of the meetings of journeymen printers assembled to decide any point of common interest.

The Seven Sleepers.—The Seven Sleepers of

Ephesus, a favourite legendary subject in mediæval art, were seven Christians who, to escape the persecution of Decius, concealed themselves in a cave whose mouth was closed by their enemies. The cave was rediscovered 200 years afterwards, when the sleepers awoke, youthful and in perfect health.

Horns of a Dilemma.—We apply the term "Horns of a Dilemma" to a situation in which a person is confronted by two opposite and conflicting lines of conduct, the advantages or disadvantages of which appear to balance; hence the analogy to the "horns" of an animal.

Ancient Lights.—These words are the name of an ancient law to protect windows of old buildings from being obscured by new buildings. A signboard bearing the words, if placed outside a building, is a warning to builders that they must not erect anything in such a way as to obscure the light from the window over which the sign is shown. The sign can only be displayed if the window has had uninterrupted light for twenty years.

Morganatic Marriages.—Morganatic Marriages are permitted by the common law in Germany to members of Royal houses and such nobility as are debarred from contracting matrimony with one of unequal rank. Such connection may

not exist simultaneously with a perfect marriage. The children are legitimate, but inherit neither rank nor estate.

Right of Way.—This is the right which the public have to free passage over roads or tracks, especially those which are not statutory roads. In Scotland forty years' continuous use gives a right, but in England use needs to be proved for a long or short period, according to the special circumstances.

Treasure Trove.—" Trove " is derived from the French *trouver*, " to find," and " Treasure Trove," therefore, means treasure found. It is treasure discovered hidden in the ground on the seashore or elsewhere, the owner of which cannot be traced. Although retention of it is illegal, the Crown usually gives to the finder a reward equal in value.

" Warp " and " Woof."—These are terms used in weaving cloth. In the roll of cloth, or web, the threads running lengthwise are called the " warp," while those crossing and intersecting the warp at right angles are called the " woof." Writers and speakers often use the terms as illustrative of character and life.

Rate of Exchange.—The rate at which the money of one country is exchanged for that of another at any given date is known as the Rate of

Exchange. This rate fluctuates daily, being governed by various considerations, such as the state of trade, the value of money, and other disturbing influences.

Civil List.—Civil List means the annual expenses of the Sovereign, together with certain annuities paid to his family. In accordance with custom, he places his " hereditary revenues " at the nation's disposal, and in return the expenses of his Privy Purse, household, residences, bounties, and alms are paid from national taxation. The total amount is fixed by statute at £385,000.

A Bolt from the Blue.—Meteoric stones are represented in mythology as the vengeful bolts hurled from heaven by Jupiter, the god of thunder. A leaden sky being indicative of storm, or thunder, a blue sky suggests immunity therefrom. Hence this phrase, by contrast, finds acceptance with us as an expression of sudden and unlooked-for disaster.

Imprisonment in the Second Division.—The forms of imprisonment inflicted by our criminal law are five—penal servitude, hard labour, and imprisonment in the third, second, or first division, according to the severity of the crime. Prisoners in the second division enjoy easier discipline than the third, especially in regard to letters and visits.

A White Paper.—Reports and documents of

public importance are placed on sale by Parliament. If a limited number of pages is not exceeded, the publications appear without covers, being termed "White Papers"; whereas those of larger proportions are issued in a blue cover, and in this form are known as "Blue Books."

Industrial Unionism.—Industrial Unionism is the natural product of industrial evolution. It is the result of the growth of the working classes to an understanding of their grievances and wants. It aims to organize all the workers in an industry into one Union; this association in its turn to form part of an Industrial Department of closely allied industries, and this Department to join others in the formation of a National and International Union.

A Corner (Commercial Sense).—A commercial "corner" is formed when a man of business has obtained control over all or the major portion of a commodity by withholding or storing it from trade circulation. This control is maintained until the general demand is so great that the holder can practically command his own price.

Market Overt.—Market Overt means "open," as opposed to secret and irregular sale of goods. In the country the only market overt is the market-place, and then only on the days specially appointed. But in London every shop where goods

are publicly exposed for sale is market overt except on Sundays.

Letters Patent.—Letters Patent are "open" letters intended for and addressed publicly to all. They are thus distinguished from closed letters, intended for, and addressed to, individuals. Letters patent are granted by the Sovereign to inventors for the monopoly and use of new inventions; also to set forth Royal Grants and privileges.

Mandamus.—A Mandamus (literally, "We command") is the legal name given to a writ from a superior court, directed to any person, corporation, or inferior court, requiring the performance of some specific act. A mandamus does not enforce private obligations, but deals only with acts of a public or official character.

French Leave.—To take "French leave" is to go off secretly, without formal notice or farewell. The French have a corresponding phrase, "To depart like the English." Both expressions date from the time when an *entente cordiale* was never dreamed of, and each country had a very poor opinion of the other's manners.

Running the Gauntlet.—Running the Gauntlet is a punishment known among soldiers, savages, and schoolboys. The victim runs between two lines of executioners, who hit him hard as he passes.

In the Middle Ages and earlier the "weapon" used was a gauntlet. Nowadays, anybody such as an author, politician, or social individual who becomes the general cockshy of criticism is said to "run the gauntlet."

Tuft-Hunting.—This term took its rise at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, where the young noblemen wore a peculiarly formed cap with a tuft. A tuft-hunter is a hanger-on to persons of nobility and submits to the insolence of the great for the sake of the supposed honour of being in their company.

Penny Wedding.—A penny wedding is one to which the guests bring contributions either in money or in kind for their own entertainment, and for the assistance of the young couple in setting up house. The contributions are not necessarily restricted to the value of one penny.

Six Follies of Science.—The six follies of science are the squaring of the circle, perpetual motion, the philosopher's stone, the elixir of life, magic, and astrology. Bacon, Boyle, and Newton sought the philosopher's stone, and many other brilliant men have tried to unravel the other mysteries.

Mabon's Day.—Mabon's Day was a monthly holiday (first Monday in every month), instituted twenty-five years ago by William Abraham ("Mabon"), M.P., for the South Wales and Mon-

mouthshire Collieries. Its purpose was to limit the coal output and to ensure good prices, thus securing better wages for the colliers.

Dutch Auction.—This expression is derived from the Dutch countries, where even now fish and fruit are thus sold. The auctioneer calls a high price, which he reduces, until someone calls out "Mine!" and thereupon becomes the buyer. In England it is legal to conduct sales in this manner without a licence.

Playing Gooseberry.—To "Play Gooseberry" is to become an unwelcome interloper between two persons who are supremely happy in each other's company, and so completely wrapped up in themselves that they resent the presence of another. The proverbial acridity of the gooseberry is probably responsible for this phrase.

Getting a Half Blue.—This term, relating to the University colours, is used for men chosen to represent their University, either Oxford or Cambridge, at tennis, racquets, or other minor sport. A man who represents his University at cricket, rowing, or either code of football is known as a "full blue."

Between Scylla and Charybdis.—"Between Scylla and Charybdis" describes a position in which danger threatens on either side. "Scylla" and "Charybdis" were fabled monsters who

dwelt in two rocks which lie on either side of the Strait of Messina. "Scylla," by fierce barking, caused sailors to steer nearer "Charybdis," whose whirlpool engulfed the ship.

Crossing the Rubicon.—The first step in the Civil War between Julius Cæsar and Pompey was commenced by the former crossing the river Rubicon, which separated Gaul, where Cæsar was commander, from Italy. Hence the phrase "Crossing the Rubicon" signifies the beginning of a hazardous enterprise from which there is no turning back.

Finsen Cure.—This is a treatment for lupus, or consumption of the skin. Finsen, of Copenhagen, discovered that concentrated light, filtered through "green" glass, and thus deprived of some of its heat so as not to destroy the skin, has a curative effect. The Finsen Cure is now widespread.

Bar of the House.—This is a barrier, or railing, which separates a space near the door from the main body of both Houses of Parliament, and beyond which only members and clerks are allowed. Members violating privileges may be called to the Bar and punished. The Commons attend at the Bar of the Lords to hear the Royal speech, and Bills passed by them are received there.

Classical Literature.—The word "Classical" denotes excellence in art. It is derived from the division of the Roman people into classes, the first of which was called, by way of eminence, the Classic. Hence the term "classic" is applied to authors of standard authority, particularly to Greek and Roman writers.

Machiavellian.—Machiavellian is the term applied to the principles of government advocated by the Italian statesman Niccolo Machiavelli, namely, that the treachery of rulers is justified by the wickedness of the ruled. It is applied to those who resort to duplicity for the furtherance of personal influence or political power.

A Counsel of Perfection.—A Counsel of Perfection is a scheme which is theoretically excellent but practically impossible. Thus Universal Disarmament might be called a Counsel of Perfection, for, if practicable, it would be most beneficial. But while human nature is still imperfect, the country that adopted it would probably be captured by one of its rivals.

Asparagus Chicken.—Asparagus chicken is a chicken which is sold in the early spring, at the same time that the early asparagus is brought into the market. It is hatched in winter, and fed with fattening foods for this purpose. It generally fetches a good price.

Sinn Fein.—Sinn Fein literally means "Ourselves alone." It is the name of an organization whose aim is to promote Irish manufactures of every description, to purify the administration of municipal and other bodies, and, incidentally, to obtain control of purely Irish affairs. In short, the creation of an ideal Irish Ireland.

Under the Rose.—Under the Rose means in strict confidence. Cupid bribed Harpocrates, God of Silence, with a rose not to betray the indiscretions of Venus. Hence the flower became the emblem of silence, and was often sculptured in banquet-rooms to remind guests of secrecy. In 1526 it was placed over confessionals.

Worth his Salt.—Long ago Roman soldiers received a daily portion of salt as part of their pay, and when, through time, this was changed to money, the amount was termed *salarium*, salt money. Hence arises our word "salary," so that "worth his salt" really means worth his salary, or wages.

Flying Dutchman.—The Flying Dutchman was a spectral Dutch ship, whose captain was condemned for his impieties to sweep the seas round the Cape of Good Hope without being able to reach shelter. The idea of a spectral ship is common among sea-going Teutonic peoples. Coleridge used the idea in his poem *The Ancient Mariner*,

and Captain Marryat wrote a novel on it called *The Phantom Ship*.

Begging the Question.—This is a logical fallacy, the conclusion itself being taken as one of the premises of an argument. For example, to argue that a doctrine should be condemned "because it is heresy", is to "beg the question." Heresy ought to be condemned, but the doctrine should first be proved heresy.

Man of Straw.—This term is used to denote a mere puppet or tool. When used in a commercial sense it is applied to one without means or substance, who stands as surety for another. It also applies to a person put forward to affect a responsibility or an argument he cannot sustain. Hence a man of straw is either a weakling in discussion or a participator in fraud.

Bourgeois (Social Sense).—"Bourgeois" is a French word, for which we have no exact equivalent, signifying a well-to-do person of the middle class who has made sufficient to live in comfort. In its present-day use there is an implied suggestion of intellectual mediocrity and sham gentility.

Land Bank.—This is a bank established to assist approved smallholders to purchase their holdings, or enable them to build cottages or outhouses thereon, and to advance to them sums of money,

at a reasonable rate of interest, for procuring live-stock, seeds, manure, implements, etc. Those who wish to apply for loans must become members of the bank by election through the secretary and committee, and by taking up at least one bank share.

Truck Act.—A Truck Act is a statute which compels masters to pay their workmen in current coin of the realm, and which prohibits payment in "truck," that is, goods or money's worth. The present English Truck Acts date from 1831, being amended and extended in 1887 and 1896.

Eugenics.—This is the doctrine which teaches that persons suffering with some incurable organic or mental defect, such as consumption or imbecility, should not be allowed to marry and so transmit their weaknesses to their offspring. It has as its ideal the physical and mental perfection of the human race.

Sardonic Grin.—The term "Sardonic" is probably derived from the root-word *sairo*, meaning "grin," or from a Greek plant, *Sardonion*, which was said to cause an involuntary contraction of the facial muscles, somewhat resembling laughter. Hence the word is used to describe the forced and jeering laugh of a cynic.

Pot Luck.—To take "pot luck" originally meant to accept an invitation to dinner and be content with whatever might be in the "pot" for the meal. The phrase is still used when inviting people to dine in a spirit of good-fellowship and without regard to ceremony. But it also signifies that one is taking chances in other matters.

Holding a Candle to the Devil.—This means paying mock veneration, deference, or service, from motives of gain, to a person for whom you have no sincere respect, or for whom you may even have an aversion. The idea comes from the veneration still paid to saints by holding a candle to their images.

Second Sight.—This is an extra faculty of vision claimed by certain persons. Involuntarily they see distant or future events taking place; sometimes people or objects not actually present appear to them. Those who believe in second sight regard it as of supernatural or divine origin. Disbelievers, on the other hand, maintain that second sight is fanciful delusion due to mental weakness and encouraged by those who are ignorant of mental disorders. Though more common in the past, it has still many disciples, notably in remote districts like the Highlands of Scotland.

Natural Selection.—This theory, advanced by

Darwin, supposes that animals by instinct select mates that will best serve to produce hardy offspring, and that in all orders of life the hardiest survive, while the weak perish. The "survival of the fittest" thus brought about, means that those survive which are best adapted to their environment—i.e. climate and country.

April Fool.—The first of April is called All Fools' Day, and for some time past has been consecrated to fooling. Any unguarded person who can be imposed upon on this day is known as an April Fool. The fooling usually takes the form of a practical joke. Although the custom seems prevalent in some form throughout the world, antiquarians are unable to afford any explanation for it.

Blue Stocking.—In London, about 1750, a social circle, consisting mostly of women, cultivated plain dress and literary conversation, tabooing frivolous gossip. A male guest, prominent at their parties, Mr. Stillingfleet, wore blue stockings, so the coterie was derisively called the "Blue Stocking Club"; and "Blue Stocking" became a term synonymous with "learned woman."

The Milky Way.—A luminous, misty band stretching across the heavens, and consisting of millions of stars appearing so closely packed as to

seem like a "way" of "milky" light. Galileo first suggested that it consisted of stars, and Sir Wm. Herschel was the first to see the stars through a telescope. It stretches round the heavens in a circle, and about half the circle may be seen from any given point.

Marathon Race.—A Marathon race is a long-distance foot-race on open roads. The name and length of the race are derived from the historic feat of a Grecian warrior, who ran from Marathon to Athens with the news of the victory over the Persian army in 490 B.C.

Burning One's Boats.—When a man embarks on a more or less hazardous enterprise, and after starting, deliberately destroys, or cuts off, his only means of retreat, so that he must go ahead at all costs, he is said to "burn his boats."

Crocodile Tears.—Crocodile tears are the tears of the hypocrite, forced out by a simulated emotion. The expression refers to a characteristic of the crocodile. The flesh round the eyes of the reptile is so formed that the corner of each appears to hold a tear, giving a tearful expression to the crocodile's features.

Tennis Elbow.—"Tennis Elbow" is a painful condition of the elbow, caused more particularly by back-hand strokes in the game from which it derives its name. Anatomically it is due to

a strain of the long head of the triceps muscle, which finds insertion into the back of the elbow-joint.

Dead Sea Fruit.—Dead Sea Fruit means anything outwardly attractive, which, upon trial, is found worthless and disappointing—like the fruit growing beside the Dead Sea in South Palestine, which, though appetizing in appearance, tastes like bitter ashes. This is owing to the nitre, and other ingredients, in the waters of the lake.

Ménage à Trois.—*Ménage à trois* is a French phrase meaning a family or household of three. It is generally used in this country to denote an establishment of three persons—that is, three to be catered for in the household, who are not necessarily of the same family.

The Fourth Dimension.—A solid body has three dimensions—length, breadth, and thickness. But we know of nothing having more than three, so we cannot, in our present state of being, know what the Fourth Dimension—if it exists at all—is, though some have suggested that it may be *time* or *duration*.

Swelled Head.—Swelled Head is a slang term applied to one who, having met with some success, feels so triumphant and pleased with himself as to become overbearing and irresponsible in his manner or actions. The complaint sometimes assumes a

virulent form in those inheriting exalted positions, prompting them to impulsive acts or bombastic speeches, inconvenient to their satellites though amusing to the rest of mankind.

Probate.—By law an executor must obtain Probate or " proof " of a will. Various documents, including the original will, are sent to the Probate Registrar, who, everything being correct, returns to the executor an " approved " copy of the will. This constitutes the " Probate," entitling the executor to administer the estate.

Noblesse Oblige.—This phrase, handed down from the days of chivalry, strictly translated, means " nobility obliges." In earlier times it indicated the responsibility of the feudal chief to his dependents. To-day it means the acceptance, in a generous spirit, of one's responsibilities as a member of the general community.

Buying the Rabbit.—" Buying the Rabbit " means in modern terms asking or looking for trouble, or doing something that will inevitably earn a rebuff. The phrase owes its origin to the fact that one of the old-fashioned meanings of the word " rabbit " is *curse*, or *bother*.

Epicurean Philosophy.—Epicurus taught that pleasure was the universal good and pain the universal evil. In effect, he said to his disciples, " You will be good if you are happy." Seeing

that some people get their pleasure out of vice, his teaching has been condemned as dignifying sensualism, but it should be remembered that Epicurus found his own " pleasure " in meditation and virtue.

Plimsoll Mark.—Samuel Plimsoll, the " seaman's friend," by his exertions in and out of Parliament, caused an Act to be passed preventing the careless and avoidable loss of sailors' lives at sea by overloading ships. Nowadays no vessel may carry cargo which sinks her below the official mark painted on the hull and called the " Plimsoll mark."

Board of Green Cloth. — The Board of Green Cloth is a committee presided over by the Lord Steward, which has general control of the Royal Household, examining and passing all its accounts. The name had its origin in the fact that the members sat at a table covered with a green cloth.

R.S.O.—R.S.O. is an obsolete Postal abbreviation for " Railway Sub-Office," meaning a post office which was not subordinate to a head office, but which received its correspondence from travelling post offices. All offices are now styled either head offices or sub-offices.

Burying the Hatchet.—This phrase signifies " making peace," or replacing enmity by friend-

ship. Among the North American Indians the hatchet is a symbol of war, and its solemn interment in the presence of two opposing tribes signifies that strife between them is at an end. The instrument usually buried is a tomahawk.

Graft (Political).—By "graft" is meant the traffic in votes, in offices, and in all kinds of political undertakings for personal gain. It is practised largely in the United States, and includes what we know as "bribery and corruption," but is more comprehensive.

Augean Stables.—According to the Greek legend, Hercules in one day cleansed the byres, or stables, of Augeas, King of Elis, where 3000 oxen had been confined for many years, by turning the rivers Alpheus and Peneus through them. Nowadays the term Augean Stables affords a convenient metaphor in declamations on political or other corruptions.

Royal Warrant.—The "Royal Warrant" is a much-coveted honour, and confers the privilege of using, on advertisements and elsewhere, the words "By Appointment," in conjunction with the Royal Arms. It is granted to tradesmen and others, appointing them to supply the Royal Household with their goods, and is generally accepted as a testimony to quality.

With a Flea in the Ear.—An insect's bite in the inner portion of the ear is not only disagreeable, but very difficult to get rid of. When a conversation finishes with an irritating yet unanswerable remark, the recipient is said to be dismissed "with a flea in the ear."

Kangaroo Closure.—When a Bill is hindered in its progress through Parliament by innumerable amendments, the Kangaroo Closure comes into action. The Chairman of Committees picks out the most important amendments for discussion, the remainder being passed over, or "jumped." Hence the term—Kangaroo.

Horse-Power.—Horse-power is an engineering term used to denote the rate, or degree, of working power in machinery. The actual measurement called horse-power is 550 foot-pounds raised, pushed, or pulled per second. The term was introduced by Watt, but the estimate is considered too high, the real power of a horse being about three-quarters of the "horse-power" of engineering.

Mormonism.—Mormonism is the religion taught in the "Book of Mormon," translated by Joseph Smith in 1830. This, assisted by "revelations" said to have been vouchsafed to Smith, forms the basis of Mormonism. Its chief tenets are the resurrection of the body, baptism by immersion,

and polygamy. The last has in recent years been nominally suppressed.

The Unwritten Law.—Altogether apart from the laws of nations is the deep-rooted, primal sense of justice in man. The dictates or codes evolved from this sense go deeper and farther than any legislation, and constitute "the unwritten law."

Guillotine (Parliamentary Sense).—The "guillotine," which takes its name from the famous instrument of decapitation, is a form of closure in parliamentary debate. The time of closure is decided by the party in power. When that time arrives, the "guillotine" falls, the debate is at an end, and the vote is then taken.

Friendly Society.—Friendly societies, though aiming incidentally at the promotion of brotherhood, are virtually co-operative insurance societies, the members of which, by the regular payment of a stipulated contribution, secure to themselves a weekly allowance during sickness, and to their heirs a fixed sum at death for funeral expenses.

Bacchanalian Revels. — Bacchus, the God of Wine, was antiquity's "Lord of Misrule." His chief festivals were the "Bank Holidays" of ancient Greece, and were celebrated with wild revelry and much drinking. Entertain-

ments of an excessive conviviality are consequently called Bacchanalian revels.

Real Evidence.—Real Evidence is evidence drawn from the condition of a thing, as against "Personal" evidence, which is evidence drawn from the statement of a human being. Thus a bloodstained knife is "real" evidence of its being bloodstained; a man's statement of its condition is "personal" evidence of the fact.

Trade Bounty.—Trade Bounty is a premium offered by any Government to encourage some branch of industry, the home producer being thereby favoured as compared with the foreigner in the same department. The matter of trade bounties constitutes a considerable part of a controversy known as "Free Trade" *v.* "*Fair* Trade."

Spartan Training.—The youth of ancient Sparta, in Greece, were taught to believe that flinching under physical pain was a sign of weakness, and unworthy of a man. The term is now applied to any severe system of training which tends to develop courage and endurance in a high degree.

Cui Bono.—*Cui bono* is a Latin phrase meaning "To whom is it a benefit?" It is derived from the Roman legal maxim that the easiest means of discovering the author of a crime was to find out

" who benefited " by it. It is popularly used to mean, " What is the good of it ? "

As the Laws of the Medes and Persians.—Oriental kings claimed to be divine personages, and their utterances were assumed to be infallible. A reversal of a decree would have been regarded as a sign of human infirmity. Thus " the laws of the Medes and Persians," when once sealed with the King's ring, were unalterable.

Ward in Chancery.—A person of less than twenty-one years of age, generally with property, whose natural guardians are either deceased or unfit, may be appointed a Ward in the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice. Such a ward is thus placed under the protection of the law, and may not marry or dispose of property without the consent of the Court.

Nil Desperandum.—*Nil desperandum* is an old Latin quotation from the poet Horace, the truth and force of which have not altered throughout the ages. Its popular interpretation is " Never despair," and the expression is frequently employed by persons in difficulties to denote indomitable perseverance and unswerving resolution.

Barmecide Feast.—There is a story in the *Arabian Nights* which tells how a prince of the Barmecide family put a series of empty dishes before a starving beggar, pretending that they

contained a sumptuous repast. Hence, to offer anyone false friendship, or promises destined never to be fulfilled, is to give a "Barmecide Feast."

Reaping the Whirlwind.—"Reaping the whirlwind" means being visited by the evil results of a mistaken and rash line of conduct. The phrase is taken from Hosea viii. 7: "For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind."

To Eat Humble Pie.—This phrase expresses figuratively the acceptance of an inferior position or adoption of a submissive attitude. "Humble" is a corruption of the word "Umbles," or "Numbles," the coarser parts of a deer killed in hunting, which, made into a pie, were formerly the rations of the lower hunt-servants.

When Greek meets Greek.—This phrase is used to express pithily the strenuousness of the struggle between evenly matched opponents, and is usually applied to a battle of the wits. It is a misquotation of the line, "When Greeks joined Greeks then was the tug-of-war," from *Alexander the Great*, Act IV, by Lee.

Two Strings to One's Bow.—Cutting the bowstrings of the archers was the ancient equivalent of spiking, or plugging up, a battery; but a man with a spare string was still in the "fighting line." The phrase means the possession of two things of which one intends to keep the better, as in the case

of a girl who encourages two suitors, or a man who works at two businesses.

Circumlocution Office.—The term "Circumlocution Office" carries with it the same idea as "red tape." It was originated by Dickens in *Little Dorrit*, as a skit on the dilatoriness of Government offices in transacting business. It was an office where business was habitually muddled up and delayed by high-salaried State officials, who shirked duties by passing them on to other departments, who in their turn passed them on elsewhere.

The Riddle of the Sphinx.—This originated from Greek mythology. The Sphinx, a fabulous monster, sent by Juno to plague the people of Thebes, propounded this riddle: "What animal walks on four legs in the morning, two at noon, and three in the evening?" When Œdipus correctly guessed the answer, "Man," the Sphinx, in fury, killed herself.

White Man's Burden.—The "White Man's Burden," a phrase invented by Kipling after the Spanish-American War, signifies the responsibility of the white races of the world for the care, guidance, and protection of the "coloured" peoples over whom they rule.

Cinque Ports.—*Cinque* is French for five, and the Cinque Ports were five seaports, under a "Lord

Warden," which had the privileges of "Home Rule" and exemption from national taxation. In return they maintained a fleet for the defence of the Channel. These ports were: Dover, Hastings, Romney, Hythe, and Sandwich. Winchelsea and Rye were included afterwards.

Green-eyed Monster.—This is a figurative way of speaking of jealousy. "Green-eyed" means that jealousy sees things through a green medium, which naturally makes them appear more ghastly and just the opposite of those seen through rose-coloured spectacles.

To Throw up the Sponge.—In old prize-fighting days, when either combatant was in a hopeless condition, his seconds acknowledged defeat by throwing up into the air the sponge which was used in washing and refreshing prize-fighters between each round. The term is now applied to any contest, when, to avoid further loss, one side voluntarily retires.

S.P.Q.R.—These letters were frequently seen in Ancient Rome, and stood for *Senatus Populusque Romanus*, which means the "Roman Senate and People." They were placed on all public property as a sign of constitutional government, showing that everything was the property or act of the people.

Pidgin English.—"Pidgin English" is a kind

of "accommodation" language, composed of corrupted English, Portuguese, and Chinese words, which grew up between Chinese traders and foreigners using their ports, enabling them to talk business without trouble and delay. The word "pidgin" is a Chinese corruption of the English word "business."

Oyer and Terminer.—This is a commission granted to judges of assize, giving them authority to try criminal cases (all treasons, felonies, and trespasses) in each county into which they go. It is literally a commission "to hear and determine," *oyer et terminer* being the old French equivalent for this.

Tara's Hall.—Tara is a hill in the county of Meath, Ireland, upon which the capital and palace of the early Irish kings were situated. Moore has rescued the name from oblivion in his well-known song, "The Harp that Once Through Tara's Halls," which echoes the lingering sentiment associated with the idea of Irish nationality.

Swan Song.—That the swan sings when nearing death is a favourite and persistent poetic fable. The last writing or speech of a genius is often called the "swan song," especially if the tone or character of the work shows that the nearness of the end was realized.

Wild-Cat Schemes.—Wild-Cat Schemes fre-

quently refer to bank ventures of an unsound and worthless character. The title was suggested by the history of a famous insolvent American bank, which displayed a panther on its documents. The term is sometimes applied to any other scheme running without control.

County Palatine.—County Palatine means a county over which an earl, bishop, or duke held royal jurisdiction. Chester, Durham, and Lancaster were counties palatine. The Earl of Chester, the Bishop of Durham, and the Duke of Lancaster, respectively, possessed in these counties royal rights as absolute as those of a king in his palace.

Triple Alliance.—Triple Alliance is a compact between three nations for joint action in a direction where their interests are identical. European history has seen three important triple alliances: the first occurred in 1668, between England, Sweden, and Netherlands against France; the second in 1717, France, Britain, and Netherlands against Spain; and the third in 1883, Germany, Austria, and Italy (renewed in 1902), to check French and Russian aggression.

Writ of Attachment.—When a person disobeys an order of court he may be brought before that court to answer his disobedience by writ of attachment. The document is written in the form of a command to the Sheriff, or other officer, to

" attach " the wrongdoer and bring him before the court to answer for the disobedience or wrongdoing.

Rosetta Stone.—In 1799 a tablet of black basalt was found near Rosetta, a town on the Nile Delta. It bore an inscription in Egyptian hieroglyphics, and script, with a translation in Greek. This discovery of the Rosetta Stone, as it has since been named, gave the key to the hieroglyphics on Egyptian monuments which had baffled solution for ages ; and much of the history of the ancient dynasties was thus revealed.

Sterling (Money).—" Sterling " is a name used with reference to British money, signifying that it is genuine and of the value fixed upon by the Mint. The term probably originated from " Esterlings," a name given in England to early German traders. In the time of Richard I it was applied to coins which were of exceptional purity.

Round Table.—King Arthur, a famous legendary warrior, was supposed to have existed in the sixth century. His knights were much attached to him. When he conferred or feasted with them, he placed them at a " Round Table " so that none sat at the head and none at the foot, and jealousy was avoided. The " Round Table " has thus become synonymous with " Equality," and is applied to conferences and debates in business

or other affairs where all present have equal right of speech.

The Sick Man (Political).—Just prior to the Crimean War, in which England and France assisted Turkey against Russia, the Tsar Nicholas aptly likened the dying power of the Turkish Empire to the gradual sinking of a sick man. The phrase lived, and Turkey is still "The Sick Man of Europe."

El Dorado.—The mythical "Golden Land" believed by the Spanish conquerors of South America to be located near the source of the Orinoco. Its capital, Manoa, was said to be partly built of gold and to be founded on a lake with golden sands. Hundreds of daring adventurers perished in quest of it. Now it means the lands of "faery" gold and perfect happiness, and is a subject often treated by painters and poets with high ideals. A gold-mining district in California is also called El Dorado.

Legal Tender.—As a debtor might inconvenience a creditor by an unwieldy payment—such as five pounds in copper, for example—a limitation is set upon the amount of certain coins which may be legally tendered. A creditor can thus refuse, if he likes, to accept a payment in copper or silver which is too bulky to carry on his person or elsewhere. Copper coins are legal tender up

to twelve pence ; silver up to £2 ; sovereigns for any amount. As, however, copper and silver are much in demand this law is not often brought into force.

Setting the Thames on Fire.—A man who " sets the Thames on fire," is one whose abilities, added to great industry, bring him to the front. Some authorities say that " Thames " is derived from " temse," a sieve used by farmers ; the original phrase therefore meant that a hard-working man might set a sieve on fire by his energy.

Collectivism.—Collectivism is the economic theory of modern socialism that industry should be carried on with a collective capital. Its adherents favour the acquisition of property and industrial enterprises, and the fixing of the conditions of employment by the State or municipality alone.

The Grille (Parliament).—The Grille is the name given to the screen of open metal-work in front of the ladies' gallery in the House of Commons. Behind it the ladies sit, and through it they are able to observe the proceedings in the House.

Bonanza.—" Bonanza " is a Spanish word signifying " prosperity." America uses it in connection with " good fortune " of any kind. As a nautical expression it refers to " fair weather." From these instances it may be gathered that

"Bonanza" means, in ordinary language, "a stroke of good luck."

Black Cap.—This is part of a judge's official attire, but is rarely worn. When, however, a judge passes sentence of death he must be in full dress, and so assumes his cap. Hence the Black Cap has become specially connected with the capital sentence.

Halcyon Days.—According to the Greek legend, Alcyone, the daughter of Æolus, the wind-god, was changed into a kingfisher. While the kingfisher brooded on her nest Æolus tempered the wind and sent peaceful weather to his transformed child so that she could nest in peace. Thus Halcyon days mean calm, peaceful times. The actual period was seven days before and seven days after the winter solstice, i.e. December 21st.

Papal Nuncio.—"Nuncio" means messenger, and the full term signifies a Papal messenger, or ambassador placed by the Pope at a foreign court, to facilitate the transaction of ecclesiastical business. They are resident mainly, but not exclusively, at the courts of Roman Catholic sovereigns.

Bi-Metallism.—At the present time gold is the only coin which can be paid out up to any amount, there being a limit to payments in silver and copper (*see* Legal Tender). This means, for in-

stance, that twenty shillings would not be worth a pound if the shillings were to be paid out by the million in one single payment. Bi-metallism would authorize the limitless value of silver as well as gold; it would change our gold standard into a two-metal standard, that of gold and silver.

Lonely Furrow.—This phrase was made historic in a speech by Lord Rosebery, when he declared, in isolation from strict party ties, that he was ploughing a "lonely furrow." Its meaning is obvious, as indicating a politician or worker in any movement taking independent views, and prepared to be detached from all political parties.

Gordian Knot.—Gordius, King of Phrygia, is said to have made a knot which defied all efforts to untie it until Alexander the Great, indicating his character and policy, cut it with his sword. Overcoming difficulties by adopting a bold course of action, despite obstacles, is frequently termed "severing the Gordian Knot."

Black Rod.—"Black Rod" is chief Gentleman Usher to the Sovereign and Usher of the Order of the Garter. He has charge of all arrangements for maintaining order in the House of Lords, and he, or his deputy, summons the House of Commons to the Peers when its presence is required.

Zonal Tariff.—The Hungarian Government has

divided the country into zones, or belts, having Buda-Pesth as their centre. The fare for travelling across each of these zones, or any part of them, although they vary in length, is fixed at one standard rate—hence zonal tariff.

A Roland for an Oliver.—Charlemagne, a King of the Franks, who lived in the eighth century, had two knights named Roland and Oliver, whose exploits were so equal and similar that only a story about Oliver could equal one about Roland A tale told to match another is a good example of "A Roland for an Oliver"; the phrase *quid pro quo*, or tit for tat, is sometimes used in the same sense.

Impressionists (Art).—"Impressionists" are artists who endeavour to depict scenes by those general and most striking characteristics which first impress the spectator. Thus particular attention to detail is sacrificed in order to represent shapes and tones which are of chief importance to the eye. The best impressionist pictures are works of a high order of imagination.

Cooking his Goose.—A King of Sweden, on approaching a hostile town, excited the contempt of the inhabitants by the smallness of his army. To express this they hung out a goose for him to shoot at, whereupon the King set fire to the town to "cook their goose." The phrase now applies

to anyone who is ruined or cheated by his own act.

Pan-Slavism.—Pan-Slavism is a movement which aims at uniting into one confederation all the Slavic peoples, such as Russians, Bulgarians, Poles, and Bohemians. It opposes the introduction of foreign ideas and institutions, and seeks to raise Russia, or, perhaps, Poland, to the position of sovereignty over them all.

Renaissance.—The Renaissance, or New Birth, is the name of a certain period in architecture, sculpture, and painting, when there was a return to the old classical principles of Greece and Rome. This took place in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The sculptors and artists of this period considered that Greek art was the best, and based all their artistic creations upon the Greek methods.

Nemesis.—Nemesis in Greek mythology was the daughter of Night, and directed the vengeance and righteous anger of the gods on insolent favourites of Fortune. She is thus known as the Goddess of Retribution, and nowadays Nemesis means a just punishment which has inevitably fallen upon a wrongdoer for criminal acts for which he has previously seemed to have escaped unpunished.

Nobel Prizes.—These are five prizes of £8000 each, founded by Nobel, the Swedish inventor of

dynamite, for the encouragement of those who work in the interests of humanity. They are awarded annually for the most important work in physics, chemistry, medicine, idealist literature, and service in the interests of International Peace.

Hall-marked.—" Hall-marked " is a term applied to articles of gold or silver, tested at the Goldsmiths' Hall or other assay office, and marked with a stamp guaranteeing their degree of purity. Hall-marks have differed from time to time in detail, a lion, a leopard's head, and a crown all having been used. The words are employed in conversation to express a proof of genuineness or excellence.

Conscience Money.—" Conscience Money " is an expression coined to represent sums sent anonymously to the Chancellor of the Exchequer by those who have unwittingly or wilfully defrauded Government of its dues. It is also applied to bequests, or gifts, made privately by people to those they have injured or robbed. The term originates from the belief that the sender is impelled to this course by the stings of conscience.

Vox Populi.—This is part of the Latin phrase, " Vox Populi, vox Dei," " the people's voice is the voice of God." It does not mean that the voice of the many is wise and right, but that it is irresistible. As God's laws cannot be withstood, neither can the popular will.

Caucus.—This term originated in Boston, Massachusetts. It means a private meeting of the leaders of a party, generally politicians, where business is arranged and candidates chosen for coming contests. Its actions at times arouse a great amount of suspicion.

The Lone Star State.—Texas is sometimes referred to as "The Lone Star State." For a brief period before the American Civil War Texas was an independent State, and prominent on her national flag was one solitary star, hence the nickname.

Dilettantism.—From the Latin *delectare*, to delight; a term used for the admiration of the fine arts. At first it meant "a love of art"; it was then applied to dabbling in art; and has lastly become a depreciatory term conveying the notion of a shallow critic or trifling virtuoso.

Suiting to a T.—Suiting perfectly, with the exactness indicated by a T-square, is the idea contained in this expression. It conveys a general idea of suitability—exactly the thing required.

In the Seventh Heaven.—According to Mohammed there are seven heavens. The Cabbalists (a sect of Jews who profess to understand a mystical science of signs and numbers) also maintain that there are seven, each rising in happiness above the other. Colloquially, a person in the seventh

heaven is in the highest possible condition of delight.

Pin-Money.—Pin-money, in bygone times, was a special allowance made to wives for the purchase of pins when these were comparatively costly articles. In modern times the term is retained for an allowance to wives for purely personal expenses, as distinct from their housekeeping and dress money.

Ultramontane.—The seat of the Papacy being beyond the mountains (*Ultra Montes*) separating Italy from the rest of Europe, any policy dictated by, or deferring unduly to, Papal authority, so that the interests of the State in question are subordinate to those of the Roman Catholic Church, is called Ultramontane.

Coverture.—Formerly a woman by marriage placed herself legally under her husband's " coverture," or protection. Thenceforth he became entitled to her property and answerable for her debts and obligations. She was consequently not amenable to legal proceedings, but modern legislation has considerably altered and improved her legal status in this respect.

Letting the Cat out of the Bag.—This phrase means to tell some secret in a rash moment, on impulse. Long ago, unscrupulous people used to take a cat tied in a bag to market, where they

tried to sell it for a pig. If, however, the purchaser opened the bag before buying, the cat, of course, jumped out, displaying the fraud.

Heel of Achilles.—"The Heel of Achilles" is a synonym for "the weak spot," and arose from the myth that Achilles was dipped by his mother in the River Styx, whose waters had the virtue of making one invulnerable. Unfortunately, she held him by the heel, which, remaining unwet, was consequently vulnerable and open to hurt.

In Forma Pauperis.—The constitution of the country is so arranged that the law for all purposes is the same to rich and poor. Money allows the rich to sue or defend at will. The poor man, by pleading poverty, can sue *in forma pauperis*, and by that means be relieved of all costs.

Showing the White Feather.—Though colloquially equivalent to "funk," the *exact* meaning of this phrase belongs to the cock-pit. As a cock may *unexpectedly* reveal its underbred nature by a tell-tale white feather, a person with a former reputation for fighting ability may, by a cowardly act, reveal his excessive timidity of nature.

Proletarians.—Proletarians are the poorest class of citizens. Under Servius Tullius those Romans who had no other property to contribute to the State but their *proles*, or offspring, were called *proletarii*. French political economists adopted

the term to denote their own poor citizens, and German and English writers have since followed.

The Evil Eye.—One of the means by which witchcraft impressed itself on the ignorant and superstitious was the power of the Evil Eye. A witch thus possessed was thought capable of inflicting serious injuries by a look, which was magically fascinating. The belief in the Evil Eye is not quite dead yet.

Mason and Dixon's Line.—This term is often used in United States history to indicate the general division, before the Civil War, between the free Northern States and the slave-owning Southern States. Strictly, it is the boundary line between Pennsylvania and Maryland drawn by Mason and Dixon in 1767 to settle disputes.

Homeric Laughter.—"Homeric Laughter" is a term used with reference to that loud and uncontrolled laughter which sways a person or number of persons on the occurrence of some ludicrous episode. It originates from the "unquenchable" laughter so often characteristic of the heroes in the "Iliad" of Homer, the Greek epic poet.

Nine Points of the Law.—The complete saying is, "Possession is nine points of the law," meaning that the holder of property whose title is challenged has nine chances out of ten of retaining it. This appears an exaggerated estimate, but the odds

are undoubtedly in favour of the man in possession.

Abracadabra.—This word, the name of a Syrian or Persian deity, was for long considered a potent amulet, especially when written on parchment in the form of an equilateral triangle. It has suffered the fate of most superstitions, and is now the contemptuous designation of high-sounding nonsense.

The Oxford Movement.—This describes an attempt by certain Oxford men to revive the spiritual life of churchmen on "catholic" lines. It originated from Keble's sermon on National Apostasy, and grew by means of the "Tracts for the Times" (1833–41). The principal leaders were Newman, Pusey, Keble, and Robert Wilberforce.

By Hook or by Crook.—Something done by fair means or foul, by one device or another. Usually implying difficulty in attaining the thing sought, which may necessitate the use of dishonest or extraordinary methods. As to the origin of the phrase there is no conclusive evidence, although many stories have been invented to explain it.

Options (Stock Exchange).—This is a speculative method of dealing in shares. In the most common form the purchaser pays a small sum which entitles him to buy certain specified stock at a

settled date and price, irrespective of the market prices then ruling. This payment, plus broker's commission, is all he risks.

The Upper Ten.—This term is applied to personages of distinction or note in a civilized community. The phrase was coined by N. P. Willis when speaking of the élite of New York society, who, at that time, did not exceed ten thousand in number. "The Quality," and "Great Folk," have a similar meaning.

Uncle Sam.—A name first given to the United States during the War of Independence, when someone, inquiring the meaning of the now familiar sign, U.S., on a bale of imported goods, was laughingly told it meant Uncle Sam, the nickname of Samuel Wilson, a popular wharf-inspector.

Sublime Porte.—This term is a French rendering of Babi Ali, or The High Gate, and refers to the Ottoman Court, or the Government of the Turkish Empire. At the Báb, or gate, of the palace it was the custom to dispense justice.

Faggot Votes.—"Faggot Votes" belonged to a time when a man without property could not vote. They were created by dividing property into several small lots (as a faggot was split up), each just large enough to qualify its owner to vote. Portions were transferred to persons otherwise unable to vote. The extension of the franchise

in 1884 to all rural householders destroyed the practice.

Born in the Purple.—Said of children of Royal birth. It originates from a Greek word meaning porphyry, or purple. An apartment of the Byzantine Palace lined with porphyry was reserved for the use of the Empresses, and the birth of their children was described as porphyrogenite, or "born in the purple."

Nisi Prius.—Trials by jury in civil actions. In the old Latin form the parties were summoned to Westminster, "unless before" (*nisi prius*) the fixed time the judges visited the county to which the case belonged. The proviso is now discontinued, the trials taking place on circuit as a matter of course.

Olympus.—The highest peak of a mountain range in Greece, between Thessaly and Macedonia. Picturesquely clad with pine trees, and of commanding appearance, it was singled out in ancient times as the abode of the gods, and has a place in most of the legends of Grecian mythology.

At Sixes and Sevens.—"At sixes and sevens" is a phrase signifying the state of disorder and confusion often familiarly described as "higgledy-piggledy." Anyone who has just moved into a house and has nothing straight is at sixes and sevens, and the phrase also applies to people who

cannot agree in argument. In all probability the words originated in the "six, yea seven" of the Hebrews, meaning an indefinite number, which necessarily suggests confusion.

Log-rolling (Political).—In every legislative body there are some men with individual interests. If these combine and thus pass in turn the measure which each desires, their mutual assistance is known as log-rolling. The term arose in America, where neighbours helped each other to roll their logs to the river for transport.

Sybarites.—Sybarites are persons devoted to pleasure and luxury. The name is derived from Sybaris, in ancient Italy, whose inhabitants became so luxurious and indolent that their highest rewards were given to inventors of new pleasures. They even banished from the city all noisy professions that their slumbers might be undisturbed.

Uncle (Pawnbroker).—Prior to the institution of "spouts," or lifts, in pawnbrokers' shops, a hook was employed to lift articles. The ancient equivalent of "up the spout" was therefore "gone to the hook." Among students the Latin word *uncus* (a hook) was used, and this gradually developed into "uncle's."

Injunction (Legal).—If anyone alleges that another is infringing his rights he can apply to an equity court for an order to forbid further

infringement. If a brass band, for instance, were to rent a room close to a hospital to practise in, the hospital could apply for an order for the band to desist on the ground that the noise of the instruments endangered the lives of the patients. This order, if granted, would be an injunction. It does not prevent a further civil action for damage already done.

Pandora's Box.—A classical story relates how Jupiter caused Pandora, a beautiful woman, to present her future husband with a box which, being opened, set free all the evils in the world, with one solitary virtue, Hope. Hence a valuable present which turns out in reality to be a curse is like Pandora's box.

The Cold Shoulder.—To give anyone "the cold shoulder" is to imply by manner and actions that he is an unwelcome guest or companion. In earlier times there was a custom of offering an undesirable guest the humble cold shoulder of mutton instead of the dainties a favoured friend would expect; and this curious habit has been handed down in name to the present day.

Metric System.—The metric, or decimal, system signifies the system of money, weights, and measures first used in France about the year 1799, and adopted afterwards in all civilized countries other than English. Metre (derived from the Greek *metron*,

a measure) is the name of the fundamental unit on which the whole metric system is based. It measures 39·37 inches. In England we have twelve inches to the foot, three feet to the yard, and so on in an irregular rising scale. In France, however, the values rise by tenths, or hundredths. The presence of a decimal refers to the fact that the units are multiplied or divided by ten.

Apple-pie Order.—This is a colloquial expression implying the uniform or precise arrangement of anything. Although the origin of the phrase is, more or less, a matter of conjecture, the idea of apples being sliced and methodically arranged for a pie probably suggested it. It is a metaphor, or comparison.

Lobbyists.—"Lobbyists" are persons who find access to the members of Parliament by meeting them in the lobby—a place open to both members and outsiders—for the purpose either of influencing the members as to how they should vote, or to obtain some benefit through the interview.

Ultra Vires.—"Ultra Vires" means "beyond the powers," and generally relates to proceedings of directors of companies. Where articles of association provide that certain specified things shall only be done by the shareholders in general meeting, directors cannot legally do those things at a board meeting; they would be acting *ultra vires*.

Queer Street.—This is a slang term used to denote the feigned residence of one in financial difficulties, or one of a flighty or shady character.

Jack Ketch.—This is a common name for the hangman of England. Authorities differ as to its origin, some considering it to have been the name of a hangman in the reign of James II. Others think it a corruption of Jacquett, sometime Lord of the Manor of Tyburn.

Petty Sessions.—The ordinary sittings of Justices of the Peace are known as Petty Sessions, the word "petty" being derived from the French *petit*, small. Such a Court is empowered to deal with various offences without a jury's intervention. It consists of two or more justices, or a Borough police-magistrate, and a clerk having legal knowledge.

Feather in one's Cap.—This is a phrase currently used to denote some mark of honour or distinction. It originates from a custom—once almost universal—of adding a feather to the headgear for every enemy slain. It still survives in Scotland as a privileged honour for the sportsman killing the first woodcock.

Iconoclast.—The word "iconoclast" means "image-breaker," and was first applied to the promoters of a movement in the Church in the eighth century against the use of visible emblems

of sacred things. The name is now given to those who attempt to destroy prevailing ideas or beliefs. Their aim is to prove that people are deluded in their convictions.

Davy Jones's Locker.—Research cannot trace the origin of "Davy Jones"; but according to the mythology of sailors he is the sea-devil that presides over the spirits of the deep, appearing in varied shapes predicting disaster. Davy Jones's Locker represents the bottom of the ocean, the grave of all who perish at sea.

Delphin Classics.—The "Delphin Classics" were a series of Greek and Roman classics edited in France for the use of the son of Louis XIV, called the Dauphin. Editions of individual authors in octavo were often reprinted in England. The Delphin Classics are not now considered to be of much value.

Sour Grapes.—This term is from Æsop's fable, entitled "The Fox and the Grapes," in which the fox, being unable to reach the grapes, promptly pronounced them "sour." Its application is obvious. Men who long for something beyond their reach are piqued at their inability to secure it, and try to console themselves by speaking of it in terms of contempt and depreciation.

Ku Klux Klan.—This was a secret association, founded about 1866, in the Southern States of

America, to prevent newly emancipated negroes from exercising their political rights. The association, which was winked at by the white population, first whipped its victims, and subsequently resorted to murder. It was suppressed by the United States in 1871.

Pre-Raphaelites.—"Pre-Raphaelites" is the term given to the late Holman Hunt's little band of painters, and their followers, who tried to revolutionize art in the nineteenth century by reintroducing the style of painting in vogue before Raphael's time. It was characterized by vivid colouring and close imitation of nature.

Scot and Lot.—"Scot and Lot" means literally "contribution and share," and refers to the old payment of parish levies according to ability. In some places those who paid "Scot and Lot" were formerly entitled to the franchise. Broadly speaking, it means paying one's share of any common expense.

Rhodes Scholars.—These are holders of scholarships founded at Oxford University under the will of Cecil Rhodes, the South African Imperialist, and open to British and German subjects, and United States citizens. Candidates must have attained a certain educational standard, be proficient in outdoor sports, and possess manly, truthful, and sociable qualities.

Ultima Thule.—"Ultima Thule," as used by ancient writers and a few modern poets, signified their conception of the world's extreme limit. Some consider this to have been Iceland or the Shetlands, the most northerly land known to the Romans. The term can now be used metaphorically to signify the limit of any territory or argument, or fantastically as one of the countries of dreamland.

Syndicalism.—"Syndicalism" is the latest system adopted by trades unionists to further their interests. Its policy is the destruction by force of the present state of affairs, and the transfer of industrial capital from its present possessors to trades unions. The best-known process for carrying out this policy is a national strike of workers of all grades ordered simultaneously by their respective unions.

Caddie (Golf).—"Caddie" is a messenger-boy employed in carrying clubs for golfers. Possibly the word is derived from the Scotch "cadie," or "cawdie," an errand-boy, serving-man, or carrier of sedan-chairs. Another explanation connects "caddie" with "cadge," or "cadger," old hawking terms which originally meant "carrying."

A 1 at Lloyd's.—This is the mercantile firm's registered mark for denoting a ship in first-class

condition, both with regard to hull (A) and efficiency of stores, cables, anchors, etc. (1). Used generally, and shortened to "A1," it signifies anything that is highly excellent. When applied to goods it indicates sterling quality.

By-and-Large.—This is a nautical phrase. To say a vessel sails well "by-and-large" means that it sails well both "on" the wind and "off" the wind. Hence the phrase has come to mean "in all respects." To consider a matter "by-and-large" is to consider it in all its aspects.

Sent to Coventry.—To be ignored or shut out from all social recognition for a real or supposed offence is to be sent to Coventry. At one period (so the tale is) the Coventry citizens, disliking soldiers, refused social dealings with the garrison. Hence no soldier desired to be "sent to Coventry."

Argus-Eyed.—"Argus-eyed" means very quick-eyed, or watchful, from the Grecian legend of the monster Argus who had a hundred eyes of which only some slept at a time. When Argus was slain by Hermes, he transferred his eyes to the peacock's tail. Many birds and butterflies with eye-like markings have since been called Argus; and the term "Argus-eyed" is now used rather contemptuously of a guardian or chaperon who sees too much.

Red Herring (Political).—Just as a red herring

drawn across a trail will put a dog off the scent, so politicians will sometimes cause the attention of the electorate to be drawn away, by ostensibly making much of a minor point, while they engineer to their own advantage the greater question. The minor point thus used is called a red herring.

Simon Pure.—The name of a character in Mrs. Centlivre's play, *A Bold Stroke for a Wife*, which has become a household word signifying the "real man." In the play "Colonel Feignwell" impersonates the Pennsylvanian Quaker, "Simon Pure," and wins "Miss Lovely" from her guardian before the "real Simon Pure" turns up.

Pogrom.—This means an organized massacre of any particular class of the Russian people. In English journalism it is chiefly applied to a massacre of Russian Jews. The word is related to the Russian *grom*, meaning thunder. Accentuated on the second syllable, it signifies wholesale devastation, as by a thunderbolt.

Greek Calends.—This was a Roman synonym for "never," because the Greeks did not reckon by Calends. In the Roman system a Calend was the first day of each month, the day on which rents, etc., were paid. Hence a promise to pay on the Greek Calends meant sometime or never.

A Caveat (Legal).—If a person has an interest in any particular matter and wishes to protect

himself he enters a "warning" in the books of a court or public office. This is called a "Caveat," from the Latin *cavere*, meaning beware. No step can then be taken without his receiving notice so that he can appear and object.

Conversations (Diplomatic).—"Conversations" are the free discussions, on equal terms, of a diplomatic situation between authorized representatives of two nations, who have powers to propose compromises. Any arrangements made between them must be sanctioned by their countries before being carried out.

Watermark.—This is a faintly marked design or letter in the fabric of paper which denotes its size or its manufacturer. The watermarks used by earlier paper-makers have given names to several of the present standard sizes of paper, such as "foolscap," "pott," "elephant," "crown," and "post."

Policy of Pin-Pricks (Political).—A policy practised by a nation or party in politics of dabbling in minor acts in a hostile manner, while they are unable to deal with the larger issues. It was first applied in 1898 to the policy of France in reference to the conflicting colonial interests of that country and Great Britain. *The Times* quoted this as "A policy of pin-pricks," which forthwith became a political phrase.

Sword of Damocles.—This means evil or death impending. Damocles envied and flattered Dionysius, " tyrant " of Syracuse, who invited him to experience the happiness of royalty. Damocles accordingly ascended the throne ; but, perceiving a sword suspended above him by a single hair, was so terrified that he begged to be released from his imagined happiness.

Gilt-Edged Securities.—A phrase introduced in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when so many public companies collapsed, to denote investments which are absolutely sound, such as Government securities. By ascribing " gilt edges " to the certificate of these investments an idea of superiority is conveyed, just as in the case of gilt-edged books.

Platonic Year.—The earth makes three revolutions : a daily motion on its own axis ; an annual one round the sun ; and a slow revolution of the earth in a direction opposite to its axis, taking nearly 26,000 years. This last is the Platonic year. It is generally used to signify a long period, or a year crowded with events.

Dining with Duke Humphrey.—This polite way of describing dinnerless people originated thus : A monument to Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, famous for hospitality, was supposed to be in old St. Paul's. Impecunious frequenters of " Paul's

Walk" at dinner-time talked about "going to see the Duke." This became twisted into "Dining with Duke Humphrey."

The Hague Tribunal.—A permanent body of officials established at the Hague as a result of the Peace Convention of 1899, and marking a momentous epoch in the history of arbitration. It is an international Court, whose services can be called into requisition at will to determine questions of law or fact between contending nations.

The First Line of Defence.—Should Great Britain be at war, the British Isles would be liable to invasion by the enemy, but fighting at home would not be possible until sufficient forces were landed, which could not be effected unless our battleships were defeated or captured. Our Navy is therefore the "first line of defence," because it would be the first thing the foreigner would have to break through on his way to us across the water.

Poster.—The name given to a large printed bill, or placard of paper, exhibited in a public position for purposes of general information. "Post" is a size in paper, and is also any station where such a size of paper could be shown. Sheriffs in earlier times affixed their proclamations to posts.

Cut off with a Shilling.—A phrase signifying the disinheritance from a will of one who in

natural course would have received a handsome legacy. The bequeathing of a paltry shilling denotes the unrelenting displeasure of the testator towards the disinherited one.

Borstal System.—The Borstal System takes its name from the penal, juvenile-adult reformatory at Borstal, where young prisoners are taught trades and educated, and after their discharge are assisted to find employment. The main idea of the Borstal System is to keep first offenders from the contaminating influence of professional criminals.

Cimmerian Darkness.—According to the old classic fable, a people called the Cimmerii lived near Lake Avernus in caves, into which no light ever penetrated. The expression Cimmerian was used originally to describe physical darkness, but is now more commonly applied to the mental darkness of gross ignorance.

Boycott.—Boycotting is a system of persecution first instituted by the Irish Land League in 1880. A number of people set to work to prevent their victim from doing any business or from holding any social converse, as a sort of punishment arising out of some political or other quarrel. It derives its name from Captain Boycott, a farmer of Mayo, in Ireland, who was the first victim to be so treated.

The Eighty Club.—The Eighty Club is so called because it was formed in 1880. Its objects are to promote Liberal literature and education. It consists of people who are willing to advocate Liberalism by writing or speaking. During periods of political crisis, such as the establishment of Home Rule in Ireland, it tours the affected districts.

Parishioner of Stepney.—Every Englishman is, theoretically, a native of some parish, and the difficulty as to a person born on the high seas was solved by considering him a "Parishioner of Stepney." Similarly, chaplains in certain parts of continental Europe are placed under the charge of the Bishop of London.

Superman.—An idea originated by the German philosopher Nietzsche. It has been popularized in England by Bernard Shaw's play *Man and Superman*. This expresses a certain ideal of humanity in which all the weaknesses and follies of "mere man" have been eradicated and a higher standard of character attained.

Nonconformist Conscience.—The standard by which pious Nonconformists claim all affairs should be regulated. It is the reverse of compromise, and seeks to propagate its views of right and justice without yielding to opposite views. As defined by a famous Nonconformist, "Con-

science is the voice of God within, and speaks with superhuman authority." Originally the term was applied ironically, but was eventually adopted as a badge of honour.

The Noble Art.—This term refers to self-defence by using the fists, according to the methods adopted by boxers. In the "good old times" when "might was right," the man who could not defend himself was looked upon as "ignoble." Hence the qualifying word "noble."

Parnassian Heights.—In Greek mythology Mount Parnassus was the chief seat of Apollo and the Muses, and anyone reaching the "heights" was supposed to be inspired by its surroundings to extraordinary brilliancy and success in regard to poetry and song. To reach "Parnassian heights" nowadays means obtaining deserved fame for great poetic or artistic exploits.

Taboo.—In the language of a Polynesian Islander "taboo," or "tabu" as it is sometimes spelt, is the word used to indicate that a certain thing has been consecrated. We, in England, however, have naturalized the word, and extended its meaning to anything which is prohibited. With us a tabooed man is a man in disgrace or in "bad odour" with his comrades.

Consulate.—A modern Consul is the commercial representative of one Power at a business

centre of another; and his official residence, or office, is the "Consulate." This is regarded as the territory of the Power he represents, and interference with its privileges is a gross breach of international law.

Fool's Paradise.—A man lives in a "Fool's Paradise" when, satisfied with the enjoyment of the moment, he persistently shuts his eyes to the illusory character of his hopes for the future. A philosopher may be said to live in a fool's paradise when he delights in long discussions that arrive at no definite conclusion. The phrase originated in the theological conception of a *limbus fatuorum*, a place for fools just outside Paradise.

Young Turks.—This name is given to those Turks who have given up old political methods and ideas, and have set out to introduce modern methods and systems. They have recently become the predominant political party in Turkey, and claim to speak particularly for the rising generation.

White Elephant.—White elephants are sacred in Siam, and are the property of the King. Their upkeep is very expensive because of their gorgeous trappings and numerous attendants. The term is therefore used to denote anything the maintenance or upkeep of which is expensive, yet which serves no useful purpose.

Rundale System.—The system on which the land of a community, in former times, was very frequently divided amongst its various members. The procedure was to allot each man several small pieces here and there, instead of one large piece. This insured a fair distribution of land differing in degree of fertility.

Amour Propre.—This French term rendered into English means self-love. It has been construed as vanity, but is more correctly described as a necessary pride of oneself. Thus anyone wounding a sensitive man's *amour propre* humbles him, making him lose much of the regard he had hitherto entertained of himself.

The Great Powers.—"The Great Powers" is a term now signifying the six leading European States—Great Britain, Germany, France, Austria, Russia, and Italy. Through their size, influence, prestige, and commerce, these Powers dominate European affairs, and, working harmoniously for the general well-being, form the Concert of Europe.

Ultimatum.—An ultimatum is a verbal or documentary message used in diplomatic and industrial disputes, expressing the final proposals of one of the parties. Should these proposals be rejected "diplomatic relations" and "conferences" cease, and war, national or industrial, may be declared.

Fabian Tactics.—In the second Punic War Hannibal entered Italy and defeated the Romans in many pitched battles. His plans, however, were frustrated by Fabius Maximus, who eventually wore out the invader by cautious, dilatory, guerilla strategy. Thus Fabian tactics indicates a policy of patient, harassing opposition rather than decisive attack.

Hammered (Stock Exchange).—A member of the Stock Exchange who cannot meet his obligations to the market is officially declared a defaulter. The declaration is read from a rostrum, the attention of the members being first called by striking the rostrum three times with a wooden hammer. A defaulting member is thus "hammered."

Short Circuit.—"Short circuit" is an electrical phrase. Should two wires, leading from an electric source to some object, say, for instance, from an accumulator in the cupboard to an electric lamp in the hall, happen to touch one another on the way, the current simply flows from the accumulator to where the wires meet, and back to the accumulator again, instead of round the complete, or "long circuit." The householder then finds his lamps will not light when he turns on the switch. Short-circuiting will sometimes cause a fire through the wires fusing, and stoppages of electric trams or

trains are sometimes due to a short circuit in the cables.

Eureka.—" Eureka," a word derived from the Greek *Heureka*, signifies the triumph of discovery. Translated literally it means, " I have found it." It was Archimedes' exclamation when in his bath the truth flashed upon him that an immersed body displaces its own volume of water. King Hieron had asked Archimedes to test his gold crown, which he suspected to contain an alloy of silver. This discovery enabled him to find the amount of alloy in the King's crown.

Protean.—Proteus, according to Grecian mythology, had the gift of prophecy, but being reluctant to exercise his powers, he eluded inquirers by assuming the shapes of animals, etc. " Protean," therefore, denotes anything elusive. For example, the quick-change artist of the theatre designates himself a " Protean artist."

Wardmote.—The word " mote " comes from the old English word " mot," meaning " meeting." A " ward " is an administrative division of a town or city. A Wardmote is therefore the name given, especially in London, to a court or assembly held in a town or city ward.

Suzerainty.—" Suzerainty " is the overlordship or State patronage that a Great Power exercises over a lesser. In many cases the yoke is not a

galling one, the authority exercised being very slight. Often the relation only exists for the purpose of preventing encroachment by a rival Great Power.

Parliamentary Whip. — The "Parliamentary Whip" acts as the watch-dog of his Party. His duties are to issue notices, called "whips," underlined in number according to the importance of the expected division, marshal his men, prevent any straying, keep an eye on elections, settle disputes, and help to provide candidates if necessary.

Cul-de-sac.—*Cul-de-sac* is a French phrase meaning literally "the bottom of the bag." It is used figuratively to denote a blind alley; in military parlance, a situation with no retreat in flank or rear; and in argument, that one's opponent is unable to reply or, in other words, finds himself "in a corner."

Quidnunc.—A *quidnunc* is a person who likes to be thought well acquainted with all that is going on. Accordingly, he is always asking for news about every imaginable matter, and the formula he is supposed to be constantly repeating is composed of the Latin words, "*Quid nunc?*" meaning "What now?"

Boxers (Chinese).—The members of a Chinese secret society called *Ih-hwo-ch'uan* ("League of

United Patriots"). The last part of the name accented means "fists," and as its members practise athletic exercises, the name "Boxers" was given them by foreigners. They joined in the fierce attack upon foreigners and native Christians in 1900.

Risley Artiste.—A type of acrobat who lies on his back and juggles with burdens, generally living ones, with his feet. Two or more performers frequently toss their companions to and fro with amazing dexterity and certainty. Risley is the name of the originator of this particular form of acrobatic work.

Demurrage.—When chartering a ship for a voyage a certain number of days are agreed upon for loading and discharging cargo. Should this time be exceeded, the charterers have to pay the owners a certain amount daily for each day over the specified time. This amount is termed "demurrage."

Greek Gifts.—"Greek Gifts" is a classic phrase expressing treacherous gifts, or gifts designed to injure the receiver. It refers to the wooden horse which the Trojans received from the Greeks as a votive offering to the gods. The body of the wooden horse, however, turned out to be full of armed men, and the gift was merely a ruse to introduce enemies into the besieged city.

Garnishee (Legal).—A person owing money to a debtor against whom a creditor has obtained judgment may be compelled by a "garnishee order" to pay direct to the creditor. This might occur, for instance, if one owed a tradesman £5 and that tradesman became an undischarged bankrupt. Such a person is called the "garnishee," which means literally that he is "warned" not to pay to the judgment debtor.

Durbar.—A durbar means either the audience court of an Indian prince, or an Indian ceremonial assembly. When spoken of in this country it generally refers to an important ceremony, such as, for instance, that which took place at Delhi on the occasion of the proclamation of King George V as Emperor.

Raining Cats and Dogs.—"Raining cats and dogs" expresses an unusually heavy downpour of rain with strong gusts of wind. In Northern mythology witches rode upon the storm in the shape of cats, while the dog was an attendant of the storm-god, Odin. In German art the wind is represented as a dog's head.

The Black List.—Any person who offends against an established order of things is liable to be put on "the black list." Workmen prepare lists of unfair, or "black" firms. Judges put habitual inebriates on "the list," after which no

publican may serve them with drink. Governments " black-list " undesirable contractors. Black thus signifies disfavour.

The Red Hat (Ecclesiastical).—The Red Hat symbolizes the cardinal's dignity. Its colour signifies readiness to die for the Church. Never actually worn, it is low-crowned and broad-brimmed, with pendent cords at each side ending in tassels. The Pope gives it, or sends it by special messenger, to the recipient in public consistory, an official of the Papacy.

Old Master (Art).—The great mental awakening in the fifteenth century marked the end of the Middle Ages and the commencement of the modern intellectual world. This period, named the Renaissance, produced many famous artists, and the term " old masters " is applied collectively to these great painters, especially the Italians, such as Michael Angelo, Titian, and Raphael.

Elixir of Life.—It was the dream of all alchemists to find a substance named the " Elixir of Life," which would be a cure for all ills and greatly prolong existence on this earth. Although it was never found, science was enriched by the discovery of the medicinal uses of antimony, mercury, iron, and other minerals.

The Ghetto.—In the times when the Jews were universally persecuted, the Ghetto was that en-

closed quarter of an Italian town where they were compelled to live apart. The term is now used loosely of any locality inhabited by Jews. The word is probably an abbreviation of the Italian *borghetto*, meaning a small borough.

Yellow Peril.—From the time when the Chinese and allied races became modernized, and trained to arms on Western lines, Europe is said to have been liable to invasion and devastation by countless hordes of "yellow men." Another phase of the "peril" is their future active competition in the "markets" of the world.

Slate Club.—A Slate Club is a mutual benefit society which is wound up at the end of the year. The members pay a weekly subscription, receive sick pay, etc., and at the year's end the money in hand is divided amongst them. The accounts were formerly kept on a slate.

Islam.—Originally Islam was merely an Arabic expression denoting a pious submission to the will of God; but the closer contact of white with Mohammedan races has broadened its meaning. It is now a general term for all the races professing the Mohammedan faith.

Feathering One's Nest.—This expression, originating in the care taken by many species of birds to make their nests snug with a lining of feathers, is used of those who, while acting for others, do

not forget to provide for the future comfort of "Number One," i.e. themselves.

Santa Claus.—Santa Claus is an American corruption of "San Nicolaas," one of the best-known saints of the early Dutch settlers who came to England. This saint was with the Dutch a protector of children, and he was supposed to bestow, unexpectedly and in secret, dowries upon the daughters of impoverished citizens. From him the English have derived the Santa Claus who secretly distributes presents to children on Christmas Eve.

Boxing Day.—The day following Christmas. Its name arose from the old custom of carrying round parish poor-boxes and distributing their proceeds —a custom afterwards imitated by apprentices with their masters' customers. Nowadays "Boxing Day" provides "Christmas Boxes" for almost every English servant, the practice answering to the French New Year *étrennes*. We are, however, departing from the original custom, most Christmas Boxes being paid before, or well after, the date in question.

Christmas Waits.—"Wait" is an old English word allied to the German *wachte*, meaning a watchman. It was formerly applied to the Court watchmen, who blew horns at certain hours of the night. The name has been extended to any

outdoor instrumentalist who performs at night, particularly at Christmas-time.

Twelfth Night.—The "wise men of the East," guided by the Star of Bethlehem, discovered the Infant Saviour on the twelfth day after His birth. Ever since that time the Christian churches have held a special service, for which there are special prayers and hymns, called the Epiphany, or "appearance," on January 6th. In past times, after the religious ceremonies of the day the night was given up to revelry. Amongst English society twelfth night is usually celebrated by a ball or fête.

Lord of Misrule.—An officer formerly attached to English royal or aristocratic households, who presided over the Christmas revels. He reigned from All-Hallows Eve to Candlemas Day. He is also called "Master of the Revels," and is similar to the "Abbot of Unreason" in Scotland.

Chauvinism.—This term means extravagant patriotism with sublime contempt for foreign nations. It is the French equivalent to "Jingoism," and is derived from "Chauvin," a character in a celebrated French comedy of 1831, whose prototype was a famous Napoleonic soldier, blindly devoted to France and her Emperor.

The Waters of Marah.—This expression, denoting "disappointed hopes," is taken from the Biblical account of the wanderings of Moses and

the Israelites in the wilderness. After three days' search for water they came to a place where the waters proved to be bitter and undrinkable. From this episode the place derived its name, Marah, meaning "bitterness." At the present day the phrase means the bitterness of human sorrow, melancholy, or despair.

Booby Trap.—This is usually applied to a rather stupid form of practical joking. The word "booby" is the name of a bird of the gannet tribe remarkable for its stupidity. Hence a "booby trap" is one that, with a certain amount of thought, might have been avoided.

Tertium Quid.—A Latin phrase meaning "a third party," or a "third thing." Although occasionally used in literature, it applies more to chemistry. In this science, when two substances are chemically united, the newly formed substance is called a *tertium quid*. For instance, oxygen and hydrogen, when chemically combined, form water. This third stage is the *tertium quid*.

Wandering Jew.—The Jews, nationally speaking, have no homeland, and the term Wandering Jew is associated with them in history. The real "Wandering Jew," however, is a legendary character built up partly from the incident of Ahasuerus, a shoemaker of Jerusalem, who drove Christ from his house on the way to Golgotha, and

was supposed to be condemned to walk the earth for ever afterwards until the Second Coming, as a punishment for his crime. Several impostors have since pretended to be the Wandering Jew.

Autonomy.—"Autonomy" means "self-government," and is applied to a colony or dependency having the power of controlling its internal affairs and framing its own laws, while still remaining the "possession" of another State. In this respect Canada, Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand are autonomous.

Bersaglieri.—The Bersaglieri, Italian for "marksmen," are the sharpshooters and light infantry, or "light bobs," of the Italian army; and are distinguished from the "line" regiments by their plumed headgear. First raised in 1836, they did good service throughout the contest for Italian independence, and now rank as a "crack" corps.

Red Cross Flag.—The recognized flag of the Red Cross Society, a red cross on white ground. By international agreement at Geneva, arrived at in 1863, either armies may attend to their sick and wounded in battle without risk of being shot or taken prisoners. It was first brought into force during the Franco-German War in 1870.

Common Informer.—By numerous Acts of Parliament the police and other powers may offer

rewards in money, in order to promote and encourage discovery and punishment of offenders. These Acts provide that any person may lay the requisite information and prosecute, receiving as remuneration all, or part, of such rewards. Any person so acting is termed a "Common Informer."

Return to Our Muttons.—Speakers and writers, after paying attention to side issues, notify with these words their intention to return to the main subject. The phrase is a literal translation of the French phrase *Revenons à nos moutons*, words used by the judge in Patelin's *L'Avocat*, to remind the accuser to keep to the charge of sheep-stealing.

Pourparler.—This French word, meaning literally "for talk," has now become naturalized in England, signifying a meeting for the purpose of talking a matter over. It is largely applied to such conferences as take place between statesmen as regards national or party affairs, and so forth. It is often shortened into "parley."

Hellenism.—A word originating from the Greek language and signifying the love of the beautiful, of intellectual and physical culture, and the fine arts that animated ancient Greek civilization. With us it is usually applied to a Greek scholar or a work of art which has become imbued with Greek speech, manners, and culture.

Manhood Suffrage.—A State that adopts man-

hood suffrage gives the Parliamentary franchise, i.e. the right to vote, to every man belonging to the State. The one qualification necessary is manhood; so that under this system of suffrage beggars and millionaires have an equal right to vote. It is usually understood to include the further principle that no man shall have more than one vote.

Thin Red Line.—This phrase owes its origin to the battle of Balaclava, one of the engagements which took place during the Crimean War in 1854. When attacked at Balaclava by the Russian cavalry, Sir Colin Campbell did not think it "worth while" to form his men, the 93rd Highlanders, into square. The men, standing two-deep, and described by Dr. Russell as a "thin red line," repulsed the cavalry with deadly effect and comparatively small loss to the British.

Cut to the Quick.—In this phrase "quick" is a substantive denoting "vital part," and is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *cwic*, meaning living. The expression signifies literally "hurt in a vital part," and is used metaphorically to denote acute distress of mind caused by unkindness in word or deed.

Dementi.—An official denial of an unauthorized report is so termed, the word being derived from the French verb *démentir*, meaning "to contradict." It is most frequently applied to the

contradiction of an unfounded political rumour by the Government or party concerning which the statement has been made.

Hooliganism.—This term is applied to the conduct of violent men, chiefly of the lower orders, who roam the streets by night and indulge in "horse-play," terminating with danger to the public safety, which stamps them as a "pest" to the community at large. It is derived from a rough character, called "Hooligan," who became notorious for the violence of his outrages in the nineteenth century.

Attaché (Military).—An attaché may be the military member of an embassy, or an officer "attached" to the army of a friendly foreign Power engaged in war. His duties are to acquire, in an open, honourable manner, all possible information as to the efficiency of the men and weapons under his observation.

Obscurantist Tactics.—Used politically, this phrase means the methods by which the Opposition obscures the main points at issue, and turns the debate on to minor questions. Ordinarily, the phrase means the methods used in opposing the progress of knowledge, inquiry, information, or enlightenment.

Displacement.—Part of a floating ship is below water-level, and this portion therefore "displaces"

a certain amount of water. By a well-known scientific law the weight of water thus displaced equals the whole weight of the vessel. Thus the "displacement of a ship" is equivalent to the "weight of a ship."

Barracking (Sport).—This term, denoting rowdyism, or persistent hissing and derisive applause on the part of spectators at cricket or football matches, was introduced during the visit of the Australian cricketers in 1899. It is an alteration of an Australian native word, *Borak* (banter). In America it corresponds to our word "heckling," i.e. unchecked verbal cross-questioning and criticism.

Going to the Dogs.—This phrase means becoming impoverished or degraded to such an extent as will soon lead to utter ruin. It implies also that it is the result of one's own conduct. The term "dogs" is one of reproach or worthlessness, especially in the East, where dogs are scavengers of the streets, and become so unclean as to be unfit to touch.

Leap Year.—In order to keep to simple figures we say that the earth revolves round the sun once every 365 days. Strictly, however, the journey takes six hours longer. Hence, every four years the calendar is approximately one day short. To remedy this irregularity, a "leap" is then made

from the incorrect to the corrected date by adding a day to the month of February. Every fourth year thus corrected is called Leap Year.

Bohemian.—This is a term applied to people of free, easy, and irregular habits, or to gatherings of an unceremonial kind. Anyone who is careless over dressing, or eats at irregular hours and without regard to the niceties of an orderly table and table manners, may be called a Bohemian. Several famous men of genius, such as Dr. Johnson and Beethoven, were Bohemians, for both neglected nearly every social observance. The term is in direct opposition to etiquette. It originates from the gipsies, who are supposed to have come from Bohemia.

The Occident.—Occident means the West, as distinguished from Orient, the East. The terms are derived from the Latin words *occidens*, the falling (setting) sun, and *oriens*, the rising sun. These terms are, of course, used relatively. For example, America is occidental, or to the westward of England, but oriental, or to the eastward, with regard to China.

Barratry.—In marine insurance and in contracts relating to shipping this means any fraud or knavery committed by the master or crew, whereby owners, freighters, or insurers are injured. "Common Barratry" consists in habitually stirring

up or maintaining quarrels or lawsuits. Another meaning is attached to it in old Scottish law, where it signifies the taking of bribes by a judge. The term comes from an Italian word signifying "to cheat."

Glad Eye.—This is a smiling glance expressing a wish for acquaintance. Its use is esteemed among the less conventional male members of society for the attraction of the unattached damsel. It is not confined to any particular nationality, being simply a natural impulse which may be practised by either sex to "draw" the other.

Master of the Rolls.—This is the title of the President of the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice. Originally the Master of the Rolls was merely the custodian of the Chancery parchments—kept in "rolls." Later he acquired judicial authority, deciding matters of equity. The Judicature Act (1873) made him a High Court Judge. Now he is Lord Justice of Appeal and the head of the National Records Office.

The "Big Stick" (Political).—When ex-President Roosevelt conducted his memorable campaign, some few years ago, to abolish American Trusts and great commercial monopolies, his speeches were so threatening that the cartoons in the Press depicted him brandishing a "big stick" over the heads of his intended victims.

Harlequinade.—The minor part of an old-fashioned pantomime in which Harlequin, Columbine, the Pantaloon, and the Clown appear. It is based on ancient Italian comedy, in which Harlequin was the buffoon or jester. In modern harlequinade Harlequin is the lover of Columbine, the heroine. The Clown plays the part of knave and fool, assisted by the Pantaloon, a cowardly Spanish character. Harlequin, mute, and supposed to be invisible except to his faithful wife, defends her from the others by magic.

In Statu Quo.—*In statu quo*, literally "as it was before," is used generally to imply that the thing in question has been subjected to examination and to the introduction of new factors threatening to upset the position. These factors, upon examination, proving ineffective to this purpose, the thing remains *in statu quo*, that is, unaltered. In Latin this phrase frequently applies to the situation after a war, meaning that a country's position or affairs are unchanged.

Papal Bull.—This term denotes a communication of the Pope to the churches under his rule. The name "bull" is derived from the globular lead seal, called *bulla*, appended to it by a thread or band, with which the communication is sealed. "Bulls" are issued to further the administration of grace or justice, or to grant favours, and are

written in Latin. If the document refers to matters of grace, the band encircling it is coloured red or yellow; if to justice, it is hempen or uncoloured.

Extradition.—The delivering up to justice of criminal fugitives by one country to another, thus insuring that malefactors shall not escape by the mere act of crossing a frontier. The murderer Crippen, for instance, was passed over to the English police by the Canadian police, on an extradition warrant. Most organized States have extradition treaties which bind them to hand over criminal refugees. Those of Britain include almost every kind of wrongdoer except the political offender. The first extradition treaty dates from 1843.

Steeplechase.—A Steeplechase is a horse-race originally run over hedges, ditches, streams, etc., in a "bee-line" across the country to some prominent landmark visible to all, such as a steeple. Such obstacles, now largely artificial, are meant to try the animal's jumping powers, and to interest spectators. At the present day flags are usually placed to mark the course.

I Don't Care a Fig.—This term, which is an expression of indifference or contempt, has nothing to do with fruit. It comes from *fico*, meaning "a snap of the fingers." The French term for snapping the fingers is *faire la figue*.

Printer's Devil.—In the fifteenth century most people associated the Printing Art with the Evil One. This idea was intensified because Aldus Manutius, a famous printer in Venice, had a black boy as assistant. People called him the " Printer's Devil "—a name since applied to a boyish assistant in a printing office.

Kilkenny Cats.—The fable of the Kilkenny Cats, which fought until nothing but their tails were left, was a satire on the feud between Kilkenny and Irishtown in the seventeenth century, about the erection of boundaries, or dividing lines in the form of hedges or rivers. This went on until both towns were impoverished. The expression is applied to combatants who fight with extreme violence.

Ground Rent.—When a building is one man's property and the land it stands on is another's, then the money paid periodically by the owner of the building for the use of the land is termed the ground rent. It really constitutes a payment for permission for a building to stand upon land. It is strictly a building term, and quite distinct from ground rented for agricultural purposes.

Touch of the Tar Brush.—This disparaging phrase is applied to white persons who have a slight streak of " coloured " blood in their veins. It is much used in those countries inhabited by

both black and white races. The inexorable law of caste places such persons outside the pale of smart society.

Lares and Penates.—"Household gods." Now applied to possessions which their holder deems most sacred. Amongst the Romans, Lares were the spirits of virtuous ancestors, typified by images, which were supposed to exert protective influences on the house's fortunes. Penates were personifications of natural powers whose offices were to bring peace and plenty.

Fetish.—A fetish is a possession in which a spirit is supposed to dwell. Fetish worship is common in West Africa. The name is a Portuguese one, meaning "magic." Any charm or talisman may be called a fetish. As generally understood by us, a fetish is a hobby or possession which the owner regards almost as a god.

Alma Mater.—The relation of a University to its graduates is that of foster-mother, because it looks after the educational training of those committed to it. For this reason the university is given the Latin name *Alma Mater* (foster-mother), and the graduates are the *alumni* (foster-children). The term is in use chiefly among students, and is seldom employed by the general public.

Handy-man.—A nickname applied to the British

sailor, who can be generally relied upon to make himself useful under any conceivable circumstances. During the Boer War he proved so "handy" and displayed his usefulness to such excellent purpose that he came to be called "Handy-man" by general consent. The word also signifies a man employed to do various kinds of work.

Buffer State.—A "Buffer State" is one which owes its independence not to its own strength, but to the jealousies of its neighbours. Just as a buffer on a locomotive serves to check the force of its contact with a stationary coach when shunting, so the buffer State neutralizes to some extent the friction which arises between the more powerful adjoining States. It acts sometimes as a mediator in a quarrel. At other times rival States cannot quarrel, as each fears it may lose its influence and business with the "buffer" State.

Rag Time.—A term applied to the irregular time observed in the popular music of American coon songs, cake walks, etc. The beats and notes are not in unison, but "overlap" each other. This gives the melody a peculiar "accent," and produces a lively effect. It is known to musicians as "Syncopation."

Patrician.—This was originally the name given to the ruling class in ancient Rome to distinguish

them from the "Plebeians," or common people. The "Patricians" were descended from the senators, or *patres* (fathers), who founded the State. They consisted of families, each possessing a slave, and a "staff" of freed men and foreign refugees. The word now signifies a nobleman or anyone of high birth.

Juggernaut.—The title of an Indian religious sacrifice. The image of the Hindu God, Vishnu, is annually drawn in a huge car through the pilgrim-crowded streets of Puri in Bengal. In old days his devotees would fling themselves beneath the wheels of this car. In England, any individual who rides rough-shod over others may be termed a Juggernaut.

Lotus Eaters.—In Greek legends, Lotus Eaters were a people who ate the fruit and drank the juice of the "Lotus," a prickly shrub possessing the property of causing consumers to lose all thoughts of home and kindred and to sink into a drowsy stupor, half awake and half asleep. The term is sometimes applied to persons who forget all claims of country, relations, and friends. A man who leads a languid and listless life is also described by some authors as a lotus eater.

Sitting on the Fence.—An American phrase somewhat equivalent to our "seeing which way the cat jumps." A man who remains neutral during

a political crisis is described as sitting on the fence. It indicates the position of one who will take no side, or will first note which side is most likely to succeed. It is usually a phrase of reproach directed against the method of a timorous or crafty mind.

Dutch Courage.—A phrase used to express the false courage induced by alcohol. It originated during a succession of severe wars between the Dutch and the English in the reign of Charles II. The Dutch showed such stubborn resistance that the English soldiers attributed their pluck to the free use of alcohol. The term now applies to any form of courage which is not genuine.

Ship's Husband.—Husband literally means "the inhabiter of a house," who would usually furnish and provide for the same. A "ship's husband" is the agent, sometimes the owner himself, who personally supervises the repairs, provisioning, and general outfit of a ship.

Flaneur.—This is the French word for an idle talker, who strolls about collecting and retailing the latest town-tattle. It is used by us similarly for the clubman, or fashionable lounger, whose chief business in life is the propagation of current rumour and scandal.

Remittance Men.—This is a term of derision applied by Colonials to the work-shy ne'er-do-wells

from the Old Country, who live on allowances from home.

Black Maria.—A Prison Van, used chiefly for the conveyance of prisoners from the gaols to the courts when they are to be tried. It derives its name, according to tradition, from a Boston Negress of gigantic size and strength, named Maria Lee, who, through assisting the constables in their duty, became a terror to wrongdoers. Thus "Black Maria," then as now, was the medium by which criminals first entered the prison gates.

Barnstormer.—A name bestowed on the old-time strolling "play-actor" who recited or acted in a far-fetched, melodramatic fashion in any building—not infrequently a barn—that was available in the course of his professional peregrinations. The term is occasionally used nowadays to stigmatize an actor who is given to "ranting."

Gallery Gods.—This term was originally applied to certain actors in Biblical plays. Those who took the part of the gods descended to the stage from above, namely, the gallery. Nowadays, people who patronise the gallery of a theatre are alluded to as "The Gods."

A Place in the Sun.—This phrase has recently been made in Germany, and expresses determination to possess such portions of the earth as are

still unappropriated in order to provide colonies and commerce for their increasing population. It also means "room for one's being on earth," and applies to anyone who has done good work in some walk of life and thereby earned a "place in the sun."

Breaking the Bank.—The croupier, or official money collector, at each table of the various casinos is provided with an amount of money considered sufficient to pay any winnings. In the rare event of a player having a run of luck and exhausting this amount, the table ceases play. This is called "Breaking the Bank."

Agent-Provocateur.—This is French for an individual, possibly in the employ of the police, who makes the acquaintance of a suspected person, tempts him to commit some action which will bring him within the scope of the law, and then betrays him to the authorities.

Prima Facie Case.—This is most in use as a legal term, and means a case which, on its first examination and without inquiring into its details, appears to be well founded and worth further hearing. Literally, a self-made case on its first appearance.

Carnival.—This phrase is of Latin derivation and means "solacing the flesh." It describes that season of boisterous festivity observed in Roman Catholic countries early in the year just before

Lent. It is often distinguished by riotous merriment, in marked contrast to the mournful solemnity of the penitential season which follows. In modern times it has a wider meaning, embracing any lively outdoor or indoor entertainment, such as dancing or rinking, in which the guests use confetti and fanciful costumes.

Preamble (of a Bill).—Signifies the opening paragraph of a statute summarizing the intention of the legislature in passing the measure. The second reading in a public Bill affirms the principle, and therefore in committee the preamble stands postponed till the clauses are considered. A negatived preamble in a private Bill drops the Bill.

Utopia.—In 1516 Sir Thomas More published *Utopia*, a book pretending to be a romance of an imaginary island and people, but in reality describing social and political conditions in England, and suggesting remedies for abuses. His ideas were derided, and the term "Utopian" became current to indicate impossible ideals of living. Suggestions in advance of public opinion are invariably denounced as "Utopian."

Excise.—This word is of Latin derivation, and literally means "a piece cut off." The roots, for instance, of dwarfed Japanese trees are "excised" to prevent their growth. It is better known as

that portion of the revenues of the country which is raised on articles produced, or taxed within it. These excise duties had their origin in the reign of Charles I.

Actions of Tort.—A term applied to cases brought for actionable wrongs, other than breaches of contract. Trespass, libel, and acts entailing monetary loss through negligence are classed as "torts." The word is taken from the French *Tort*, meaning *wrong*.

Curtain Raiser.—A curtain raiser is a theatrical sketch of about fifteen minutes' duration played to the audience before the chief production of the evening. It serves two purposes—to make up a complete evening's amusement, or to encourage early attendance in order that the main production shall not be disturbed.

Imbroglio.—An Italian word signifying an intricate plot in a play or romance, or any perplexing state of affairs. Nowadays it is much used to describe in one word any strained relations between nations or persons, particularly the former, and in this sense it means a misunderstanding of a complicated nature.

Lord Privy Seal.—This is one of the Ministers of State. He sits in the Cabinet, but has no further duties and receives no salary. He is usually a statesman whose age or infirmity debars him from

controlling a Public Department, but whose experience and wisdom are of value to the State.

Elysian Fields.—In Greek mythology the region of extreme happiness where the souls of the blessed dwell after death. Hence the expression is used, especially in poetry, to denote a place of exceptional delight.

Deadheads (Stage).—Those who attend any theatrical performance with a pass, or free ticket. Performers in plays or concerts, and the chief author or composer in the programme, have the power to admit a certain number of their friends by signing slips of paper, or presenting them with free tickets. The term "deadheads" arose from the custom of roughly enumerating the heads of the audience and allowing a certain proportion for unprofitable, or "dead" ones.

Blatherskite.—A contemptuous term applied to a man who is usually talking balderdash, or nonsense, while he himself thinks he is making a brilliant speech, or talking with sound judgment. It is probably derived from "blather" (meaning bladder), which, when blown out, is full of nothing but wind.

Secured and Unsecured Debts.—If a person desiring a loan deposits with the lender deeds, or something else of sufficient value, to cover the amount loaned, it is called a "secured debt." The debt is

secure, or safe, because the lender can realize the amount he has loaned out of the deeds if the borrower fails to pay up. If the loan is obtained without, or merely on a written promise to repay, it is called an "unsecured debt."

Plural Voting.—It often happens that a man of affairs possesses residential or business property in several different places. Plural voting allows such a man several parliamentary votes, each in the different constituency for which he has a residential or ownership qualification. If he has the necessary degree he may also vote for his University.

Entrepreneur.—This French term denotes a caterer or provider of public amusements, such as a director or manager of a music-hall or place of entertainment. To our neighbours across the Channel, however, the word means also an enterprising individual who provides employment by starting some industrial concern or project.

Writ of Extent.—A document issued in the King's name and forming part of the Crown's prerogative, or right to act in regard to a debtor's affairs. It enables the goods and person of an alleged debtor to be seized before the fact of the debt has been established, thus securing that the property, out of which the Crown can realize the money owing, might not disappear in the meantime.

Bumping Races.—The rivers at Oxford and Cambridge are too narrow for outrigged boats to race side by side. They are therefore drawn up one behind the other, two lengths apart. The contest consists in each boat endeavouring to touch, or "bump," with its bow, the stern of the boat in front. Races of this class take place in February and May at Oxford, the former usually known as "Torpids," the latter as "Eights."

Cornstalker.—A descendant of a Britisher born in Australia. The different climate has had some influence on the stoutly built Britisher and changed him to a tall and slim, though well-built, Australian. The name is founded on the fancied resemblance to a cornstalk.

Heckling.—Expresses the close and merciless questioning of a parliamentary candidate. It is derived from the Scottish word "heckle," an instrument with sharp iron teeth, set in a board, used for combing and cleaning hemp in such a way as to leave only the fibre. Hence "heckling" conveys the idea of a searching examination.

Abnormal Place (Mining).—In a coal mine a seam of coal may in some parts be mixed with rock or other foreign material, or the roofing may be low or otherwise imperfect. Such defects prevent a miner from getting a full amount of coal out in a day. In brief, an "abnormal place" is one

which, through no fault of the miner, does not yield an average amount of coal per day.

Gilbertian Situation.—A " Gilbertian Situation " is one in which serious persons are placed in such burlesque positions as to excite ridicule or laughter. These situations are so called because they occur so frequently in *H.M.S. Pinafore,* and other comic operas by Gilbert and Sullivan.

Putting One's Foot in It.—This is committing a blunder of speech or a tactless action, often done unknowingly, which upsets friendly relations for the time being. Anybody openly calling a person in a photograph ugly, who turns out to be a relation of someone present, commits such a blunder. Over-politeness to a lady when she already has a cavalier in attendance is another instance.

Fiasco.—An Italian word used originally to show displeasure at a faulty note or indifferent rendering of a passage by a singer. The literal meaning is " flask," or " bottle," and the Italians used it to singers to convey the idea of " cracked," or bursting. It has now come to mean any ridiculous breakdown or failure of an entertainment or business project, such as a bad concert, a weak play, or a disastrous gold-mining boom.

Pillars of Hercules.—Two hills on opposite sides of the Straits of Gibraltar. The hill on the African side is called Abyla, and the one on the European

side Calpe, this last being the well-known Rock of Gibraltar. The two form an entrance to the western side of the Mediterranean. Tradition says that they were originally fixed there to make a bridge and to narrow the strait to exclude ocean monsters. Hercules is supposed to have torn them asunder to connect the Atlantic with the Mediterranean.

Ides of March.—For convenience of reckoning, the Roman month had three fixed dates, called Kalends, Nones, and Ides. The last generally commenced on the thirteenth of the month, but in March fell on the fifteenth. Julius Cæsar was murdered on this day, 44 B.C., which thereafter was regarded as a day of ill-omen, on which it was unlucky to transact business.

Impresario.—A word used to denote an organizer of public entertainments, usually the manager or conductor of an opera or concert party. Derived from the Italian word *impresa*, meaning enterprise, or *impresario*, a contractor or undertaker of business.

Dead Rent (Mining).—The rent of land that has been turned into a mine generally takes the form of a royalty on each ton of coal raised, but in no case is the rent paid less than a certain fixed amount, called the "Dead Rent." The landlord thus receives the royalty on coal raised, or

in cases of no output of coal the fixed, or dead rent.

In Camera.—The word "camera" literally means an arched chamber. In a legal sense it was used to distinguish the judge's chambers from the open law courts. Hence when a case is tried privately "in chambers," it is said to be heard *in camera*. Cases so heard are usually too secretly political or too gravely immoral in nature for the ears of the public.

Demagogue.—This word is derived from the Greek *demagogos*, meaning "a leader of the people" in political matters. It was originally an honourable designation, many eminent rulers of the early Greek states being so termed. It is never used nowadays, however, except to describe contemptuously a politician who "plays down" to the rabble by pandering to their prejudices and ignorance.

Aurora Borealis.—Latin words, meaning "Northern dawn." In Great Britain it is seen as an arch of whitish, greenish, or rosy light in high Northern latitudes during clear nights, especially in winter. In the Arctic regions it is a vivid mass of ribbon-like bands of light extending in irregular, broken half-circles, one above the other, from the horizon where the sun has set. As it disturbs delicate magnets, it is believed to be due to

electric discharges controlled by the magnetic forces of the earth.

Futurist.—A number of artists, who call themselves "Futurists," not long ago startled Europe by their doctrine of extreme modernity and antagonism to past ideals. Their paintings consist of detached fragments of faces, trees, and other objects mixed with cube-shaped patches of colour, and are more like intricate puzzles than pictures. Their aim is to represent the sensations left on the mind by some object, and not the object itself.

Pickwickian Sense.—This phrase is borrowed from Dickens's novel *Pickwick*. It was used by the members of the "Pickwick Club" to explain away unparliamentary, or extravagant and rude language. The hero of the novel, Pickwick, was a man remarkable for gentleness in manner and language; hence the phrase is now applied to any deed or remark, seemingly harsh, to show that it is not to be taken in the ordinarily accepted way, but to be looked upon as whimsically humorous.

Claque.—An organized body of hired applauders in a theatre. The system is of great antiquity, and has been much resorted to in France, where the application of the word *Claque* (meaning clap) originated. Claque has also come to mean a body of subservient followers always ready to applaud their leader.

Simnel Cake.—Mid-Lent was known as "Mothering Sunday," girls in service being then allowed a holiday to visit their mothers. It was customary to take home as a present a cake called a "Simnel," a word connected with the Latin *simila*, meaning wheat-flour. In shape it resembled a pork-pie, but in ingredients a plum-pudding.

Sundowner.—An Australian term applied to a wanderer who always manages to arrive at a farm too late in the evening to do any work, but in time to beg a meal and a shake-down. As his arrival synchronizes with the setting sun, this term has been aptly applied to him.

Deoch-an-Doruis.—These three Gaelic words mean the "drink at the door," that is, the parting cup, taken at the breaking up of festive meetings among Highlanders. The "stirrup cup," given by the host to departing guests in earlier times, is the equivalent in English.

Bye-Law.—Bye-law, from the Danish *By*, meaning town, and Law, is, as its derivation denotes, a particular law made by a corporation, or any such distinct portion of a community, and valid for its use only. It is supplementary to public laws, and must be for the general good of the community. The laws, for instance, relating to a particular public common, or park, are bye-laws sup-

plementary to the general public laws relating to land, roads, and forestry.

Flotsam and Jetsam.—This phrase refers to sea life; Flotsam being the name for goods lost by wreck and found floating; while Jetsam means goods thrown overboard to lighten a vessel in peril, but which remain under water. The expression is also used in reference to beggars and tramps.

Balloting for Bills.—At the beginning of each parliamentary session, private members may put down their names for introducing a Bill. When all the names are in, a ballot takes place. The winners secure precedence for introducing their measures, but only on those days and times allotted to private members.

Blind-Alley Occupations.—A Blind-Alley Occupation is one followed by boys and youths which they must relinquish about the age of eighteen. It affords no possibilities of advancement, and its pursuit, instead of constituting a useful training, generally unfits its victims for following any regular employment. A golf caddie forms a good example.

Frankenstein.—The victim of one's own invention. The expression is taken from the name of Mrs. Shelley's book, *Frankenstein*, in which the hero, a young student, discovers the secret of creation, and is thus able to manufacture a living

creature. The result is a soulless monster which immediately becomes the curse of the unfortunate inventor's existence.

Day of the Ear of Corn.—This was recently celebrated at St. Petersburg, Russia. It was so named because girls sold buttonholes of ears of corn and cornflowers, to raise money for the purpose of founding food kitchens in the famine-stricken areas of Samara and Nijni-Novgorod.

Puisne Judge.—" Puisné " means junior, or inferior or lower in rank. The several judges and barons of the former Common Law Courts at Westminster, other than the chiefs, were called *puisné;* and this title seems rightly to belong to all judges of the High Court not having a distinctive title.

Lèse Majesté.—*Lèse Majesté* is a French phrase, signifying high treason ; but it has a somewhat lighter meaning when used in English, frequently denoting indiscreet speech about one's King or Emperór.

Peace with Honour.—Means a settlement after some war or dispute which carries with it no hint of defeat or degradation, but rather much praise to either combatants or to a mediator. The words were strikingly used by Lord Beaconsfield in 1878 on his return from the Berlin Congress, held after the Russo-Turkish War. The phrase concisely expressed the successful result of his efforts to com-

pel Russia to grant Turkey fair conditions; and has since become a favourite aspiration in international politics.

Macfarlane's Lantern.—The moon. In the days when the Scottish clans were a law unto themselves, it was said that the Macfarlanes attacked their enemies and carried out their raiding expeditions in the night-time, by the light of the moon. Hence the appellation.

Dree your Weird.—Used especially by Scotch people, this phrase comes from the words *dree*, to bear, and *weird*, fate. It is used to mean that a person must endure or abide the fate planned out for him. Whatever befalls him is merely the result of the working out of his destiny.

Hydra-Headed.—The Hydra was a fearful, many-headed monster killed by Hercules. Every time a head was struck off, two more arose. The term Hydra-headed is now applied to any great power of evil, the destruction of which is as difficult as was that of the Hydra, because its headquarters are too numerous to be all struck down at once.

Norns.—In Norwegian legend the Norns were three mysterious Norse deities who wove the web of life. They ruled over gods and men alike, and dealt out joy or sorrow, and life or death. They were sisters, by name Urd, Verdandi, and Skuld,

and were practically personifications of the Past, Present, and Future.

Simple Simon.—This is the name of a very simple-minded character in the well-known nursery rhyme "Simple Simon." His extreme density is illustrated by the fact that he thought he could secure pie from a passing tradesman without paying for it. It is not known who wrote it. A person lacking in sense, very stupid, and very dense, is often called a "Simple Simon."

Ex Cathedra.—*Ex*, meaning from, and *Cathedra*, chair; a phrase used in speaking of the solemn dictates or decisions of prelates, chiefly the Popes, delivered in their Pontifical capacity. Hence, in common language, the phrase is used for any decision, direction, or order, given by people in authority.

Judgment of Paris.—A metaphor derived from Greek history for any decision which causes trouble. Paris, son of Priam of Troy, presided as beauty judge over Venus, Juno, and Minerva, and decided in favour of Venus. She rewarded him with Helen, wife of Menelaus of Sparta, thus causing the ten years' siege of Troy by the Greeks. It thus applies more particularly to judgments passed upon women competing for superiority over their rivals in personal beauty.

Millennium.—From the Latin *mille*, a thousand

and *annus*, a year, meaning a thousand years. It is described in Revelation as a period during which holiness will be triumphant throughout the world. Some believe that during this period Christ will reign on earth with His saints. In ordinary conversation a time of good government, freedom from wickedness, and great happiness.

Jerry Built.—" Jerry built " is an expressive phrase meaning unsubstantial, built to sell, but not to last ; and made of inferior material. The origin of " Jerry " is doubtful, its supposed connection with a Liverpool building firm not being confirmed. Like " jury," it may be a corruption of the French word *joury*, meaning temporary.

Making the Welkin Ring.—Welkin, from the old Anglo-Saxon word *wolcen*, a cloud, means the sky, the air in general, or place where the clouds are. " To make the welkin ring " signifies that in times of happiness or rejoicing the singing or cheering of the people concerned is so loud as to make the sky re-echo.

Lantern-Jawed.—Applied to a long, lean countenance, with apparently hollow cheeks, bearing a fancied resemblance to a lantern. The originator used it in a partly humorous sense, wishing to convey the idea that the jaws of the person so described were so thin that you could see daylight

through them. The expression occurs in Scott's *Rob Roy* and Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*.

The Gift of the Gab.—"Gab," probably derived from the old verb "gabble," signifies an abundant flow of language. One having the "gift of the gab" is endowed with the faculty of clothing his thoughts in fluent speech without having to grope for words like an ordinary person. The Irish word "blarney" has much the same signification, implying great powers of persuasion. The phrase, however, is not always complimentary, as it is often used to describe a man who talks too much. An orator, for instance, and a nagging woman both have the gift of the gab.

Growler (Iceberg).—This is an iceberg, the top of which has so melted that its surface is almost level with the surrounding sea. It therefore cannot be easily distinguished, and constitutes a serious danger to ocean traffic. It receives its name from the low moaning noise of the sea washing over it. "Growler" is also slang for a cab.

Statute of Præmunire.—To prevent lawsuits being taken to the Papal Court, a not uncommon practice of mediæval times, the Statute of Præmunire (from the Latin *præ*, before, and *moneo*, to warn) was passed in 1353. It forbids the carrying before foreign courts matters coming within the jurisdiction of the King's Court.

Zodiacal Light.—A pearly glow sometimes seen in the vicinity of the sun just after sunset or before sunrise. This phenomenon, generally attributed to volcanic and meteoric dust in the atmosphere, is rarely visible in these latitudes, except in the evenings of spring and in the mornings of autumn.

Sibylline Books.—"Sibyls" were the Roman sorceresses or prophetesses. One of them wrote the "Sibylline Books," which were supposed to contain the fate of the Roman Empire, and which were consulted in times of calamity and danger. A prophetical speech or writing is sometimes referred to as "Sibylline."

Common Serjeant.—A Law Officer of the City of London ranking next to the Recorder. Formerly appointed by the Corporation, but now by the Crown, because he acts as a judge in the Central Criminal Court. He performs various civic duties, attends on the Lord Mayor, and advises the Corporation.

Will-o'-the-Wisp.—Like Jack-o'-Lantern, this is a country name for the phenomenon called *ignis fatuus*, a light that flits about marshy places, supposed to be produced by the decomposition of animal or vegetable substances. It is in reality one of the gases which form in the mud at the bottom of ponds and marshes. When more has accumulated than the mud will hold it escapes with a

bubbling noise to the water's surface. Here it is set on fire by the oxygen in the air, and of course is so quickly burnt up that all we see is a flicker of light. Metaphorically a will-o'-the-wisp is an elusive object or fanciful scheme, which lures us on, but escapes our grasp.

Common Law.—The laws of England are largely regulated by customs resulting from experience and confirmed by judicial decisions. Law so constituted is called common law, and as such is distinguished from law created by statute or Act of Parliament. Common law is overruled by statute law. A new statute law, for instance, may upset a great deal of what previously was common law.

Stone of Destiny.—The stone fixed under the seat of the chair at Westminster in which Britain's sovereigns are crowned. Edward I brought it to Westminster in 1296 from Scone in Scotland, where it had been similarly used at Scottish coronations. Traditionally it was Jacob's pillow, coming first to Ireland and then to Scotland.

Apple of One's Eye.—The "apple of the eye" is the eye-ball, so called from its round shape. The sight, and therefore the eye, is guarded as a much-prized treasure; hence the phrase, "to guard as the apple of one's eye," when applied to a precious possession, such as a devoted man's wife or a woman's favourite child.

Non Possumus.—Latin words meaning "we cannot." A party takes up a non-possumus attitude when it declares itself unable to yield what is demanded. The words are said to have been taken from a papal formula in which the Pope refused to release Henry VIII from his marriage with Catharine of Aragon.

Cyclopes.—This means *circle-eyed,* the original Cyclopes of Greek mythology being so adorned. The ancient Greeks knew very little about volcanoes, and when they saw Etna smoking, they assumed that a mighty race of smiths lived inside. These giant smiths were supposed to forge thunderbolts in the caverns beneath Etna, their forge smoke being emitted from its summit. Hence modern blacksmiths are often playfully called Cyclopes, and any artificial construction, rude in detail, but immense in conception, is also "Cyclopean."

Ichabod.—A Biblical name bestowed by the wife of Phinehas on her son, whose birth coincided with the defeat of Israel and the capture of the Ark by the Philistines. When she heard of the defeat of Israel by the Philistines she named her newly born child Ichabod, meaning "the glory is departed," to express her grief and also to indicate the unhappy hour of his birth. The word is now applied to a nation or institution which has become decadent and effete.

Tell it to the Marines.—An expression used to show disbelief in the truth of a story, or a suspicion on the part of a listener that the narrator is trying to fool him. When marines first went afloat they were naturally rather "green" concerning nautical affairs. A sailor who related a very "tall" yarn was told to "tell it to the marines," the idea being that they could be more easily "gulled."

Tape Machine.—An ingenious development of the electric telegraph, the messages being received in actual letters and figures (instead of dots and dashes) imprinted on a narrow ribbon of paper technically termed "tape." Financial firms principally use it, receiving thereby constant information from the Stock Exchange of the latest changes in prices of shares in the Money Market.

Rich as Crœsus.—Crœsus was King of Lydia, 560 years before the birth of Christ. A warrior of great distinction, his conquests brought to him prodigious wealth. Through the centuries his wealth has formed a standard of comparison, "as rich as Crœsus" signifying that one has a superabundance of riches.

Wreck Commissioners.—Wreck Commissioners are appointed by the Lord Chancellor under the Merchant Shipping Act (1876), to go through the business of disposal by sale or purchase, etc.,

of wrecks without skilled assessors or valuers. They exercise greater powers than the old "receivers of wrecks," and may receive evidence and examine witnesses regarding ships lost at sea.

Public Trustee.—The Public Trustee Act (1906) came into force on January 1st, 1908. It was passed to provide a Public Official responsible for property committed to his charge, whether under a will or settlement. Matters within his control are guaranteed by the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom, meaning that such an official is a safe person and that property in his hands is fully protected.

Hat Trick (Sport).—In early Victorian days top-hats used to be worn at cricket matches by the cricketers, and there was a custom of presenting a hat to a bowler who performed the feat of bowling out three batsmen in succession. This term has of late years acquired a wider meaning, being applied to triple successes of sportsmen in many games and sports.

Bald as a Badger.—The badger is not bald, but, owing to the fact that its forehead is covered with smooth white hair, it has the appearance of being so. The expression owes its origin to authors of the past who had no exact knowledge of natural history.

St. Elmo's Light.—A luminous phenomenon sometimes seen on ships' masts on dark nights before, or after, a storm. It is caused by the conducting power of a mast or other projection, which draws electricity out of the air when the air is overcharged. It is so called because superstitious Spaniards thought it betokened a visit from St. Elmo, the patron saint of sailors.

Grattan's Parliament.—In 1782 Grattan, the distinguished Irish orator, succeeded in carrying through Parliament a resolution declaring the complete legislative independence of Ireland. Previous to this, the Irish Parliament represented the Protestant part only of the nation. He was instrumental in effecting much useful legislation, gaining for that Parliament the above-named title.

Monroe Doctrine.—A famous declaration by President Monroe in 1823, expressing the policy still pursued by the United States in respect to foreign countries. "America for the Americans" expresses its spirit, and adherence to its principles has preserved America from European entanglements, and guarded it against European interference.

Trinity Brethren.—Trinity brethren, or members of Trinity House, are divided into "elder" and "younger" brethren with allotted powers. Their duties, now shared by the Board of Trade, consist

chiefly in maintaining lights and buoys around the coasts, licensing pilots, etc. The name comes from the original charter granted in 1514.

Moot Courts.—The ancient Anglo-Saxon form of local government which ruled all the affairs of village, town, or shire at meetings of their respective freemen on the Moot-hill. Graver matters were left to the Witenagemot, or assembly of wise men. The term is used nowadays for a mock court held for practice in argument and discussion.

Sicilian Vespers.—A name given to a memorable massacre of the French in 1282, at Palermo, in Sicily, which began at the hour of vespers on Easter Monday. Sicily was then under Charles of Anjou, whose soldiers made themselves hateful to the Sicilians. The result was that Charles was completely overthrown.

Beating the Bounds.—An old annual custom, first practised by the Romans, and celebrated by many parishes on Ascension Day. A procession, formed of parochial officers and others, travels along the district boundaries, climbing walls or other obstructions along the line of march. This action was once necessary to preserve the parish boundaries.

Affidavit.—A statement or declaration by an individual in writing, signed, and declared true upon oath before an authorized "commissioner for

oaths." The document is then ready to be presented as testimony before some trial or legal proceeding. It is always made "ex parte," that is, on one side only, and without cross-examination; and in this respect it differs from a "deposition." The term is also applied to statements made on affirmation.

Blarney Stone.—A stone twenty feet below the top of Blarney Castle, Ireland; anyone kissing it was supposed to have gained great persuasive powers. Cormack Macarthy, in 1602, made a treaty with the Lord President, promising to yield the Castle. The President, however, could get nothing but putting-off promises and soft speeches. Hence the "Blarney Stone" legend.

Plebiscite.—From the Latin *plebiscitum*. In Roman history a law enacted and passed at an assembly of "commons," or lower-class representatives of the Roman people. In modern politics a direct vote of the whole of the electors of a state to decide a question of public importance; also a public expression of the wishes and opinion of a community.

Banshee.—A fairy of the female sex, supposed by the peasantry of Ireland and the Scottish Highlands to wail under the windows of a house where one of the inmates is about to die. She is usually depicted as a little and hideous old woman,

and her wailing cry is intended as a warning, on hearing which relatives flocked to the scene of the expected death. Certain families of rank are reputed to have a special family spirit, or Banshee, of their own.

Second Ballots.—In some countries, when there are more than two candidates for one seat, and neither secures a majority of the votes cast, the two candidates who receive the largest number of votes are submitted to the electors a second time. This second ballot prevents a man from being elected who has the minor number of votes.

Orangemen.—A society of Protestants pledged to defend the Protestant religion of the British throne and the Church against Roman Catholics. It originated with the accession of William of Orange to the British throne in 1688. The society has "lodges," or local branches, in Ireland, North America, Australia, and elsewhere. Orangemen are especially prominent in Ulster.

Log (of a Ship).—A book used in registering the rate of a ship's velocity, and for notes on the state of the weather, and incidents of the voyage. Also the name of the apparatus employed to ascertain the vessel's speed. A thin log-chip, five inches in radius, is attached to a long line and thrown into the sea. The speed with which the log-chip moves away from the ship, till the line

is played out, is the speed of the vessel. In former times a wooden log was used—hence its name.

Moonlighters.—A body of armed, disguised men, who went about by night wreaking vengeance on harsh Irish landlords who had evicted their tenants. They usually sent warning letters beforehand, which were always signed "Captain Moonlight": hence the name, Moonlighters.

Grinning like a Cheshire Cat.—According to the best authorities the origin of this phrase is doubtful; but the general idea is that the people of Cheshire moulded cheese to represent grinning cats. The phrase afterwards became applied to anyone grinning in a manner suggestive of these Cheshire cheese cats. In children's stories the "Cheshire Cat" appears as a cat with a wide mouth grinning from ear to ear.

Watered Stock.—When a limited trading company pays very high dividends, the capital is sometimes increased by giving shareholders free shares, which automatically reduces the dividend. The stock, or share, capital of such company is then said to be "watered." The idea is to conceal the exorbitant amount of profit from consumers.

Doldrums.—A region in the tropics, each side of the Equator, where dead calms of weeks' duration often prevail. Before the steamship was built, vessels were often delayed in the "dol-

drums" owing to lack of wind. From the depressing effect these calms had on sailors when "crossing the line," in the old sailing days, we get our modern meaning of doldrums, i.e. "in the dumps."

Blue Blood.—From the Spanish *sangre azul* —a quality claimed by the proud Castilians, who boasted of blood uncontaminated by alliance with the Moors. The veins of the swarthier race would not show *blue* as did those of the fairer-skinned Castilians. Hence the expression "blue blood." In England it means the blood of aristocracy.

Trooping the Colours.—An impressive military spectacle carried out to celebrate some special event, such as the Sovereign's birthday. The regimental colours, with a selected escort, are paraded along the line of troops, who "present arms," while the band plays stirring music. A grand march past of all the troops concludes the parade.

Malapropism.—This word is derived from a character in Sheridan's comedy, *The Rivals*, called "Mrs. Malaprop," whose conversation was marked by a peculiar misuse of words which sound rather alike. The following is a notable instance of a Malapropism—"comparisons are odorous."

Tantalus.—In Greek mythology Tantalus was supposed to have betrayed the divine counsels of the god Zeus. To punish him, Zeus afflicted

him with a terrible thirst. He then sent him to the lower world and forced him to stand chin-deep in water which constantly eluded his parched lips. Luscious fruit was placed near him that the winds dispersed when he reached for them. From this we get our verb to tantalize, meaning to present or offer something attractive which lies just beyond the grasp.

Marooned.—To be "marooned" is to be set on a desert island and abandoned there. This was a common practice with old-time pirates and buccaneers. The word "maroon" is a corruption of *cimarron*, a term applied by the Spaniards to anything unruly, but especially to runaway negro slaves.

Gerrymander.—To divide up an electorate into districts so that one's own political party may predominate. Governor Gerry, of Massachusetts, resorted to this trick. A map of the redistribution was made, in form nearly resembling a salamander, and this, a wit said, should rather be called a gerry-mander. Hence the meaning—to manipulate figures.

First Footing.—This is a custom peculiar to Scotland; and the term is applied to the first person to enter a house after the beginning of the new year. It is essential that this individual should not enter empty-handed; and he should be preferably dark-haired.

Icarus-Winged.—According to the old Greek legend, Icarus, son of Dædalus, flew from Crete on wings fastened to his shoulders by wax. Unfortunately he soared so high that the sun melted the wax and he fell into the sea. Hence the term is applied to ambitious individuals who attempt feats beyond their capacity.

Mendelian Theory.—A theory of heredity put forward by Abbé Mendel, in 1865, from experiments in crossing peas. First-generation hybrids were found to resemble one parent only; in succeeding generations some resemble one parent, some another, and in definite proportions. Mendelism shows that the laws of heredity are similar to those of chemistry. It occurs in bird, beast, and insect life as well as in vegetation.

Blackleg.—A *blackleg* is strictly a gambler and cheat; but some writers apply the word loosely to any rascal or wrongdoer. Men who refuse to join a strike are called blacklegs; so that, in reality, the term applies to anyone who abuses his occupation or violates any compact with his fellow-creatures.

Splendid Isolation.—This occurred in Lord Salisbury's description of England's international attitude some years ago. When other nations were entering into alliances, England stood alone, bound in no way to any other country. Those

times are over; for our agreement with Japan and understanding with France have brought us more into line with other nations.

The Convention (U.S.A.).—Presidential elections in the United States are preceded by a national meeting of delegates representing each of the great political parties. This gathering of political delegates is called the Convention (Republican or Democratic, as the case may be), and its main business is to nominate the party candidate for the Presidency.

Devilling (Law).—This is gratuitous work done for busy barristers by briefless juniors, who perform much of the drudgery in getting up cases by Counsel before entering Court. They receive in return an insight into sound methods, useful practice, and eventually good chances of professional advancement.

Admirable Crichton.—James Crichton, a Scotsman, when fourteen years old, took his M.A. degree, and at twenty was acquainted with all the sciences, had mastered ten languages, and perfected himself in many other accomplishments. Consequently, any person who is a prodigy in many subjects is termed an "Admirable Crichton."

Jewish Cantors.—The word cantor means singer, and is derived from the Latin *cantus*, singing. A Jewish cantor holds the same position in a syna-

gogue that a precentor does in an abbey or cathedral. He is responsible for the singing.

Co-partnership.—A system whereby the employees become joint-partners in their employer's business. In other words, it gives the workman a direct pecuniary interest in the products of his labour, i.e. a share in the profits. It is advocated by many as a remedy for low wages and strikes.

Box and Cox.—A farce by John Morton, in which the chief characters, named respectively Box and Cox, occupy the same room, one by night and the other by day, neither knowing of the other's existence. This leads to the identities of the two men becoming mixed, and much confusion arises therefrom.

Woolsack.—The seat stuffed with wool and covered with red cloth on which the Lord Chancellor sits. In former times it was a sack of wool placed in the House of Lords to remind the Peers of the importance of the English wool trade. In conversation it also signifies the Lord Chancellor's office.

Committee Stage (Parliamentary).—A public Bill, having passed the second reading stage in Parliament, proceeds to the Committee stage. This means that the Chairman of Committee presides in the place of the Speaker, and that the Bill is discussed in detail by the whole House,

sitting as a Committee. Progress is reported to the Speaker, after which the Bill is read for the third time.

King's English.—When many dialects were spoken in different parts of England, that used at the King's Court was considered especially the national speech, and was called the "King's English." The term is still used for the speech of educated people, and means pure and correct English of not too bookish a character.

Open-Door Policy.—A policy for securing free access to a country for commercial and kindred purposes. A familiar term, much used in international politics since 1898, when it was aptly applied to Great Britain's absolute determination, at all costs, to keep Chinese ports open to the commerce of the world.

Sisyphean Task.—Homer tells us how Sisyphus, for some crime unknown, was condemned in Hades to roll a great stone up a hill. It no sooner neared the top than it fell back to the valley. Hence a "Sisyphean Task" implies toil of a wearisome, unremitting, and ineffectual nature.

Down Under.—This is a colloquial term for Australia and the neighbouring lands. As maps and models of the terrestrial globe are always mounted with north at the top and south at the bottom, and as the Antipodes, so to speak, are

on the side of the world beneath our feet in England, the expression Down Under is a graphic, though strictly incorrect, way of describing the position.

Commemoration Week.—The Latin word *commemoratio* means "recording," and in Commemoration Week at Oxford—the close of the Academic year—the principal function is the Latin oration in the Sheldonian Theatre in memory of University benefactors. Prize compositions are recited, honorary degrees are conferred, and Oxford, at its gayest, entertains its friends.

Junta.—Junta, from the Latin *junctus*, meaning joined, is a Spanish word denoting the Grand Council of State in Spain, or other body formed for political purposes. The junta of 1808 was elected for the defence of Spain against Napoleon. Anglicized into junto, the term implies a political body working with secrecy or intrigue.

Mrs. Grundy.—The fictitious character who stands as the invisible guardian and censor of British morals. The question, "But what will Mrs. Grundy say?" frequently occurred in Thomas Morton's play *Speed the Plough*, published in 1800; and Mrs. Grundy has since become a personified model of good conduct, beyond reproach.

Morris Dances.—These were old English country dances, performed to the accompaniment of music,

jingling bells, and rattles. Subsequently, the semi-historical characters of Robin Hood and his attendants were introduced. This type of dance is said to owe its origin to the Moors. Hence the title, which is a corruption of "Moorish Dances."

Order in Council.—This is an order issued by the Sovereign, in an emergency, on the advice of the Privy Council. Until confirmed by Parliament, it has only a temporary legislative effect. Those who advise the issue of such orders are considered personally responsible for them until indemnified by Parliament.

Six-Powers Banking Group.—This is practically a syndicate of Banks, formed by an agreement between England, France, Germany, America, Russia, and Japan to help China, who is nearly bankrupt at the present time, to pay her soldiers and provide funds required for immediate use.

Wind-Jammer.—Wind-jammer is a name given by seamen to an ocean-going sailing vessel. In contrary winds the steersman lays, or jams, the ship's head as close as the sails will permit to the direction from which the wind is blowing; hence the nickname.

Naming a Member (Parliament).—Should a member of Parliament be guilty of unseemly conduct or use offensive words, persistently

refusing to withdraw them, he is mentioned *by name* by the Speaker. This is a broad hint that the offender must leave the House or be forcibly removed. Otherwise custom demands that a member be referred to as "the honourable member for ——," naming the constituency which the member represents.

Going the Whole Hog.—A phrase of doubtful origin, literally meaning, "seeing things through at any sacrifice." In America it signifies holding unqualified democratic views. In Ireland it means spending a whole shilling, "hog" being slang for "shilling." With Englishmen it means no half-measures, but through thick and thin to the finish, whether for good or evil.

Sycophant.—In ancient Greece fruit dues were charged upon figs supplied to market. If these payments were avoided, the fact was sometimes communicated to the State by a sycophant, or "informer about figs." This individual either played the sneak in the hope of being rewarded by the State, or secured hush-money from the law-breaking fig people. From this, the word sycophant has come to mean a servile flatterer or hanger-on of great men or officials.

Stone-Blind.—A phrase for total blindness. A stone, in the common sense of the word, is impervious to light, dull, and incapable of touch or

feeling. It is aptly used to illustrate destroyed sense or life, as in the cases of stone-deaf, stone-blind, and stone-dead.

A Rift in the Lute.—This phrase symbolizes a breach in the harmony of friendship, usually of lovers, over a petty matter. As a small crack in a lute, through causing the air to escape in the wrong place, tends to make its music dull and discordant, so is the intercourse of friendship or love sometimes strained by trifles, which turn harmony into discord.

Interlocutory Injunction.—While an action for libel is proceeding, an order may be granted and issued by a judge to stay further publication on the subject at issue, until the case is concluded. This order is called an interlocutory injunction. The words literally mean "restraining speech in the interim."

Protocol.—This phrase is of Greek derivation, and originally described a *first* leaf *glued* to a document, containing a note of the contents. It is now generally used to denote a first draft, or the original copy of a Government dispatch which may form the basis of a treaty.

Treaty Ports.—Until comparatively recent years, commerce between China and other nations was practically non-existent, owing to the fact that foreigners were not permitted to enter China.

This rule has lately been modified, and, under various treaties concluded between China and the Powers, foreigners have free access to certain ports, known as Treaty Ports, the principal of these being Canton and Shanghai.

Vandalism.—Aptly describes the ruthless destruction or desecration of valuable works of art or property in general. The Vandals, a race of European barbarians, invaded Gaul and Spain, and, crossing to Northern Africa, established a kingdom there in A.D. 429. In 455 they sacked Rome, wantonly destroying many artistic and literary monuments. Hence the term Vandalism.

Pegasus.—The name of an imaginary winged horse which appears in Greek mythology as a bearer of the thunder and lightning. An Italian poet describes Pegasus as a monster, at a kick of whose hoof gushed forth on Mount Helicon, in Bœotia, the spring Hippocrene, at which the Muses found inspiration. He was therefore regarded by the poet as the horse of the Muses. Hence "Mounting Pegasus" is equivalent to entering on the task of composing poetry. Pegasus is also the name of a constellation of stars in the sky which bears a slight resemblance to a horse.

Federation Ticket.—This ticket, issued by the Federation of Trade Unions to its members, is the passport of the Trade Unions. Finding they

were not strong enough, the various Unions formed a Federation, and paying a weekly contribution, the members receive a Federation ticket. Since amalgamation the Unions are very much stronger.

Crying Wolf.—This is a universal expression for shouting "danger" where none exists. It originated in one of Æsop's Fables, where a boy-shepherd repeatedly deceived his neighbours by crying "wolf" when none was there. But one day the wolf really came, and then no one would believe his cries for help and he was destroyed.

Prohibition States.—These are certain States of America where it is by law illegal to manufacture, buy, sell, or to be in possession of intoxicating liquor. If alcoholic trading is discovered, a heavy penalty is exacted and the liquor confiscated. The State of Maine first instituted this law of Prohibition.

Castle in Spain. — "Châteaux d'Espagne" (Castles in Spain) is the French version of our own phrase "Castles in the Air." As there are no châteaux or castles in Spain, the French apply the idea to unreal, visionary projects, such as that of anticipating a fortune which is not forthcoming.

Mæcenas.—Mæcenas, a wealthy Roman nobleman and friend of the Emperor Augustus, lavished

his patronage upon writers and artists of genius, such as Virgil, Horace, Propertius. The gratitude of these poets, particularly Horace, was expressed in their writings. The writings have come down to us and have thus perpetuated the name of Mæcenas as a generous patron of art or letters.

Irish Bull.—A story which contradicts itself in an amusing manner, the original narrator being unaware of the contradiction. It has been alleged that the phrase is an insulting allusion to papal edicts, or bulls, or that the reference is to Obadiah Bull, an Irish lawyer under King Henry VII. On the other hand, the English attach an uncomplimentary meaning to the word Irish, viz. "reckless exaggeration." It is probably derived from the old French word *boule*—a fraud.

Grand Viziership.—The position held in Turkey, and other Eastern lands, which corresponds to that of Prime Minister in Western countries. Derived from the Arabic "wazir," a *bearer of burdens*, it is significant of the large part borne by the Grand Vizier in the government of the country.

Confucianism.—The ancient religion of China, so called after Confucius, its founder, a great moral teacher and philosopher, who lived 500 years before Christ. It is a system of philosophy, insisting on proper obedience between prince and subject,

and parent and child. Friends are expected to consider their friends, etc. It is in reality a philosophy of etiquette; and human genius is worshipped rather than a god.

Argumentum ad Hominem.—A Latin quotation meaning "an argument to the man." In an argument of this type the speaker refers to something his opponent has said, points out that it contradicts his main point, and thus proves his opponent to be illogical or wrong.

Grub Street.—A street near Moorfields, London, and now known as Milton Street. A century and a half ago it was much frequented by penny-a-liners, scribblers, and cheap versifiers, though at various times many authors of ability resided there. Hence the term "Grub Street" passed into colloquial usage to designate a literary hack or a worthless book.

Talent Money.—Anciently a certain Jewish denomination of money, value about £396 sterling. At present it refers to money paid for eminent abilities, or eminent physical prowess. In county cricket, for instance, when a professional player exceeds a certain figure with bat or ball he receives "talent money."

Dying Duck in a Thunderstorm.—A phrase applied sarcastically or in contempt to anyone making a great fuss over a little trouble. To turn

up the eyes in a woebegone and affected manner' and groan as if all happiness on earth had ceased. The allusion is to the disturbed and restless manner of ducks in stormy weather, particularly when they are in an unhealthy condition.

Shibboleth.—A Hebrew word, meaning "an ear of corn," by the wrong pronunciation of which the Gileadites used to detect Ephraimites after the battle recorded in the book of Judges ch. XII. The latter could not sound the aspirate and pronounced the word "sibboleth." It is now used, sometimes sarcastically, to denote sectarian or party watchwords and ideas.

Running Amok.—When the Malays become maddened with opium they are wont to rush about shouting "Amoq, amoq!" ("Kill, kill!") in which frenzied state they attack anyone who comes in their way. Hence, when a person attacks others without sufficient thought or reason, either with the sword or the pen, he is said to "run amok."

Shintoism.—Shintoism, meaning literally "the divine way," is the primitive religion of Japan. It has been revived and established as the State religion, and consists of Nature-worship combined with hero-worship. It lies at the very root of Japanese national existence, the present Mikado reigning as the descendant of its chief deity, the

sun-goddess Amaterasu. This religion has 14,000 gods, but is without priests, public worship, and idols.

Catching the Speaker's Eye.—When, as frequently happens during debates in the House of Commons, two or more members desirous of speaking have risen simultaneously, the Speaker calls upon one, the others immediately resuming their seats. The chosen member is he who, in parliamentary language, succeeds in "catching the Speaker's eye."

Pythagorean Philosophy.—The system of philosophy founded by the Greek mathematician Pythagoras, in which the root idea is that everything depends upon number. Each number had its virtue: one was the number of reason, two was the number of matter, and the soul was the number of the body. The system also included belief in the transmigration of the soul, that is, its passage from man to another body.

Sixth Sense.—The sixth sense is that peculiar characteristic of certain people, usually with highly strung nervous temperaments, which is termed "intuition" or "instinct." It is that sense which warns a man of coming danger, and cannot be attributed to seeing, feeling, smelling, hearing, or tasting. Some maintain that the sixth sense is a symptom of nervous derange-

ment and should be avoided as a false conception.

Shogun.—A Japanese word meaning general, or commander-in-chief of the army. In Japan landlords lent land to tenants in exchange for military and other service. A noble, for instance, was expected to fight for his superior in rank in return for holding land. That same noble could sublet his land to another man of lower degree, who in return was expected to serve him in some manner. The Shogun was the head of the entire army which included these feudal tenants. For about seven hundred years each holder of this position virtually ruled Japan, until in 1868 the Mikado, who had always been acknowledged as the rightful sovereign, abolished the office.

A South Sea Bubble.—Any bogus enterprise or "wild cat" scheme that enriches the organizers and ruins the unfortunate people who put their money in the concern. Called after the memorable South Sea Scheme of 1711. The company purported to trade with the Pacific Coast, but soon became entangled with the Government and the public. A gambling spirit was aroused and bogus companies were started. These failed and aroused suspicion; with the result that there was a rush to sell out, and the "Bubble" was "pricked" in 1720, ruining many thousands in its collapse.

Fire Danger Zone.—That part of the City of London inclosed by Cheapside, Aldersgate Street, Old Street, Finsbury Pavement, and Moorgate Street. Here, owing to the narrow streets and closely built warehouses used for innumerable trades, a number of which use and stock inflammable goods, many serious and extensive fires have occurred.

Stoicism.—The modern meaning of "Stoicism" is indifference to pleasure or pain. This was the "Theory of Happiness" which formed part of the doctrine of the philosopher Zeno, who lived between 340 and 260 B.C. He taught in the *Stoa Poikile* (Painted Porch) of Athens, and his disciples in consequence became known as "Stoics."

Posse Comitatus.—Literally means the "power of a county," "the power" legally being the county's strength in able-bodied males between fifteen and seventy years of age. Such persons can be summoned by the sheriff or other authorized officials, when necessary, to assist in the suppression or apprehension of rioters and other lawbreakers.

Duma.—The Russian National Assembly or Representative Council elected by the people. Owing to the revolutionary state of the country after the conclusion of the war with Japan in 1905, the Tsar was compelled to establish a modi-

fied form of constitutional government, and the first Duma, or semi-popular Government, met in May, 1906.

A Quixotic Individual.—A person romantically chivalrous, but unable to distinguish between acts of common sense and acts of stupidity. Derived from the famous Spanish novel *Don Quixote*, by Cervantes. In this novel Cervantes caricatured in a humorous and kindly manner the decayed knight-errantry of the Middle Ages, through its hero Don Quixote, who, inspired by ideals of chivalry, attempted ludicrously impossible feats. He tried, for instance, to fight a windmill, on the supposition that it was an enemy out to destroy a fair lady.

Midas' Ears.—Midas, in Grecian legend, a king of Phrygia, was an arbiter in a musical contest between Pan and Apollo. Apollo, being judged the winner by all except Midas, gave the latter asses' ears for his stupidity. To have Midas' ears, therefore, is to be incapable of appreciating musical talent.

Dark Ages.—A general name applied by historians to the period which followed the overthrow of the Roman Empire in the fifth century by the German and Gothic tribes. These barbarians obliterated almost all traces of learning, culture and civilization, so that the condition of Europe

remained barbarous and chaotic for several centuries.

Federalism.—Federalism is a policy in which several States join together in national union, with the object of assisting each other in all matters affecting their general welfare. States so united may be called a Commonwealth, Dominion, or Empire, but remain independent in their own internal affairs. The Government of the United States forms the most striking example of Federalism.

Penang Lawyers.—Possibly a corrupt form of "Penang Liyar," a palm growing abundantly in Penang, and from whose stems stout walking-sticks are made. It is also suggested that the name may have been given because of the efficacy of such sticks in quelling disturbances and restoring law and order. It appears to have no connection with the English word lawyer.

Hauled over the Coals.—To be "hauled over the coals" is synonymous with receiving a severe reprimand for some unjustifiable act. The reference is to the old form of trial by ordeal, in which the suspected person was compelled to pass barefooted over glowing coals or hot irons as a test of his culpability.

Letters of Junius.—A remarkable series of seventy letters written by an unidentified author

over the signature "Junius," which appeared in a London newspaper called the *Public Advertiser*, between 1769 and 1772. They consisted chiefly of outspoken criticisms of statesmen and public affairs, and were notable for their close reasoning, apt illustrations, and brilliant epigrams. Taylor and Lord Macaulay attributed them to Sir Philip Francis.

Sweated Industry.—A sweated industry is one which provides the public with cheap commodities and the dealer with enormous profits; but which pays the workman starvation wages and often compels him to work for more than eight hours a day. Hood's *Song of the Shirt* was the first popular appeal against this wretched traffic, and strikes have been organized to put an end to it.

Accolade.—The name of the ceremony by which a man is "dubbed" a knight. The Sovereign touches with a sword the shoulder of the kneeling recipient. From the Latin *ad* (to) and *collum* (neck), because originally the Sovereign merely touched with his hand the neck of the man thus honoured.

A Kettle of Fish.—A kettle, or kiddle, was a fence placed in a stream to entangle fish. When full, it presented a lively spectacle of fish, weeds, and debris, and an awkward mix-up to deal with. Hence the term is applied to any confused state of affairs.

Estoppel.—Derived from the old French word *estoper*, to bar or stop. In law it means stopping a person from asserting a fact which contradicts some previous assertion already accepted in evidence. A party in litigation is legally prohibited from making assertions or denials (true or otherwise) inconsistent with his previous statements or acts, as proved by court records, legal deeds, or his own conduct.

Hymen.—In classical mythology the God of Marriage, represented as a radiant winged youth, carrying a torch and a veil. Supposed to be son of Bacchus (God of Wine) and Aphrodite (Goddess of Love), or of Apollo and one of the Muses. Bridal couples are often alluded to as "votaries of Hymen."

Concert of Europe.—This term is used in reference to combined action by the principal European Powers. Sometimes the affairs of minor States necessitate foreign intervention, as in the Turco-Greek War and the Boxer insurrection. By joining together in a united effort to quell such a disturbance, each European Power is prevented from advancing its own interests at the expense of the others. The balance of power and prestige is thus maintained.

The Pipes of Pan.—Pan was the god whom the Greeks looked upon as controlling all rural affairs.

He was regarded as the guardian of flocks, pastures, and bees, and as the inventor of the reed musical pipe. He inspired mortals to peace or war by playing on reed pipes. His charm was especially potent in woods and forests. Nowadays the term "Pipes of Pan" is interpreted as the voice of Nature.

Doctors' Commons.—A place near St. Paul's Cathedral, London, where the Ecclesiastical Courts were formerly held and wills preserved. The lawyers who practised in these courts were mostly Doctors of Civil Law, and had to "common," that is, dine together, four days in each term; hence the phrase, "Doctors' Commons."

Volapuk.—The first universal language to attain any measure of practical success. Invented in 1879 by Schleyer of Constance, Baden, and advocated by the Philological Society in London in 1887. Its vocabulary is mainly based on English, Latin, and Romanic languages. Volapuk has been largely superseded by Esperanto.

Gretna Green Marriage.—Scotch law only requires mutual consent before witnesses to render a marriage valid. Eloping couples from England consequently made for Gretna, the nearest Scotch village to the Border, where the blacksmith received their declaration and acted as parson. Since 1856 a residential qualification has rendered such marriages illegal.

Welsher (Sport).—Also spelt "Welcher," originally a north of England term meaning "a failure." An epithet of disgrace applied to a swindling better, or bookmaker, on a race-track, who absconds without paying his losses, or who first collects betting money from a number of dupes and then deserts. The term also applies to defaulters in other kinds of sport.

Broadsheet.—Also called *broadside;* a sheet of paper printed on one side only and not arranged in columns. The printed matter generally deals with important news, or declarations about public affairs. Thus Royal Proclamations, police announcements, and Papal Indulgences are usually printed broadsheet. The illustrated broadsheet preceded the pictorial newspaper.

Stating a Case (Legal).—A statement by a magistrate, setting out the details of a case decided by him, and his reasons for arriving at his decision, which is in turn adjudicated by judges of the High Court. This formality is demanded by anyone at law who considers that the magistrate's decision is incorrect.

Filibusters.—The name "Filibusters," from the Spanish *filibustero*, meaning freebooter, was first given to pirate adventurers who infested West Indian waters in the seventeenth century. It was revived to describe Americans engaging in

expeditions against Mexico after the conclusion of the war of 1845–1848, and now means persons engaging in unauthorized warfare.

Rara Avis.—A Latin phrase signifying "a rare bird," hence a prodigy, a person or thing of uncommon occurrence. Juvenal, the Roman satirist, speaks of a noble character as being "a rare bird on the earth, something like a black swan," Australia with its black swans being unknown in his time.

Waters of Lethe.—In Greek mythology, *Lethe* was one of the rivers of Hades whose waters, when drunk, had the power of inducing forgetfulness of the past. It is a fanciful idea in much favour with poets of all countries. "Lethe" means death or oblivion, and from this we have derived "lethal chamber," meaning death chamber, and lethargy, or drowsiness. Lethe is also the name of a river in Lusitania.

Ukase.—Ukase is from the Russian word *ukazu* —an imperial edict. It is a decree proceeding from the Tsar direct, or from the Senate acting for him, and has all the force of a law. Generally speaking, it is the dictate of any autocratic master.

Indian Summer.—In the United States a period of calm and dry weather occurring in autumn between spells of severe storm and flood. The name is derived from the custom among the

Indians of harvesting their corn at this time. Indian summer corresponds to a similar season in England called St. Martin's Summer from St. Martin's Festival, which falls on November 11th. A spell of warm, sunshiny weather in October is often called an Indian summer in England.

Euthanasia.—The practice of administering narcotics in hopeless cases, which, though relieving the patient from intense pain, also shortens life. It is upheld by many eminent men, and has been the subject of much heated discussion. These discussions, however, have not yet been successful in overcoming the deeply ingrained belief that a doctor can never be certain that his patient will not recover, and therefore should not be allowed to assist in a patient's death.

Wild and Woolly West.—A phrase roughly applied to the less civilized and more remote States of Western America, near the Rocky Mountains, and so called from the prevalence of numerous wild animals and the primitive state of law and morality existing there.

Coster.—Coster, short for costermonger, was originally written "costard-monger," and meant a seller of apples. The word now strictly means anyone who sells fruit or vegetables in the street, from a barrow or a stall. It is, however, loosely

applied to hawkers dealing in miscellaneous wares.

Escheat (Legal).—This means literally "passing of a person's unclaimed property to the Crown." If the landlord of a manor dies, leaving no will, and without heirs, his estate by law is escheated to the republic or sovereignty of his country. Formerly escheat formed part of punishment for crime; but now, with a few exceptions in Scotch law, it is practically confined to failure of heirs.

Promethean Fire.—Prometheus was regarded in classical tradition as the founder of mankind. He stole fire from Heaven and bestowed it upon man, together with the arts which control of it makes possible. His name has thus come to signify the divine spark with which each human being is animated to a more of less degree from birth.

To Give Quarter.—To spare the life of a defeated foe. Some trace this expression to times when the vanquished were sent to their captor's "quarters" for ransom or slavery; but it more directly refers to the custom of accepting as ransom a quarter of a captive's pay for a certain period.

The Khaki Election.—This was the General Election of 1900, when the Government appealed successfully to the country for its approval of the

South African War. It was called the "Khaki" Election for that reason. The name is further explained by the fact that the khaki uniform was then being generally worn by our troops for the first time. Hitherto it had been confined to certain Indian regiments. The word "khaki" is Hindustani for dust-coloured; so that both uniform and name originated from the East.

Carat.—A unit of weight for precious stones and gold. Originally the carat was the seed of an Abyssinian pod-bearing plant called the carob-tree. Seeds from this plant are of such invariably equal weight that they have been used for weighing precious stones in nearly all countries. The diamond carat is equal to 3·2 troy grains, or about four pearl grains. The gold carat is a twenty-fourth part of pure gold. Gold is thus reduced from 24 to 22 or 18 carat, according to whether 2 or 6 parts of alloy have been mixed with it. Thus carat is a measure of purity in gold.

Gorsedd.—Gorsedd is the inner circle of the Welsh National Eisteddfod, cherishing its historic ritual. Composed of Bards, presided over by the Archdruid, it confers degrees, regulates Eisteddfodic procedure, and meets twelve months in advance to proclaim with impressive ceremony the approaching visit of the National Festival to a locality.

Kow-Tow.—A Chinese ceremonial of extreme homage or submission, in which a person kneels and touches the ground with the forehead. It is an English rendering of the Chinese word *ko-tou*, *ko* meaning knock and *tou* meaning head. With us the word is used to indicate any act of cringing, or extreme subservience, to a superior.

Deed Poll.—Formerly, when legal "deeds" (written contracts) entailed obligations on both parties, the parchment was "indented," or torn into two irregular pieces, which later could be fitted together to detect fraud. Deeds binding only one party had a "polled" or smooth-cut edge, and are now termed "Deed Polls."

Shofar.—The Hebrew ram's-horn trumpet used to call the people together on solemn feast-days, and still sounded in Jewish synagogues once yearly on the Day of Atonement. As a symbol of the Divine Presence to give victory, its use in battle roused the valour of the Israelites.

Harakiri.—A Japanese form of suicide. The method usually adopted is to cut two cross gashes in the abdomen in the presence of witnesses; after this act a "second" cut off the head. Under the feudal system it was sometimes obligatory, but was abolished in 1868. The voluntary form still survives. Its practice is chiefly among territorial nobles and members of the military class,

to whom the " happy dispatch " is offered by law as a means of avoiding disgrace or anticipating execution.

Cosmos.—The Greek word for *Order ;* was used by Pythagoras to mean the universe, owing to the perfect order and arrangement everywhere apparent in Nature. It was afterwards adopted by writers on natural philosophy to express the universe as a working system, or as a manifestation of a divine power. It stands opposed to *Chaos*, the confused, unformed, first state of the universe.

Holding out the Olive Branch.—The olive branch was the symbol of peace of the ancient Greeks. Holding out the olive branch in their time was the equivalent of our modern custom of waving the white flag. Probably based on the olive branch carried by the dove that returned to Noah's Ark when the flood began to subside, signifying peace between God and man.

Letters of Marque.—These were licenses, or commissions, granted to captains of private vessels (privateers) during war-time, allowing them to seize and plunder the enemy's ships. The practice was considered justifiable as a return thrust at the enemy for injuries received. Vessels so licensed could engage in this form of robbery without being mistaken for pirates. Privateering was

abolished among European nations, except in Spain, by the Treaty of Paris, 1856.

Laws of Deodand.—From the Latin *Deo dandum*, meaning "given to God." In former days a law which consigned all personal belongings that inflicted death on others (apart from crime) to God, or to the Crown. Thus the cart which ran over a man, or the horse which kicked him fatally, was forfeited to God—or the Crown—for pious and charitable purposes. This practice was abolished in 1846.

Spa.—A name now applied to health resorts, or "watering places," where mineral wells exist, containing sulphur, magnesia, iron, or other waters whose medicinal and health-giving properties have become famous. The name is taken from "Spa," a town in Belgium, where the first mineral wells were discovered six centuries ago.

The Eternal Triangle.—An expression first used in one of Ibsen's plays, referring to the complications that result from love entering into the relationship between one man and two women, or two men and one woman. A large proportion of our fiction deals with the problems arising from three characters being thus situated.

The Nine Gods.—The group of deities whom the Etruscans (natives of Etruria, a division of ancient Italy) regarded as possessing the power to hurl

thunderbolts. They are alluded to in the opening verse of "Horatius," one of Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome":

"Lars Porsena of Clusium
By the Nine Gods he swore."

Hue and Cry.—In olden times the district in which a felony was committed was held responsible if the culprit escaped. Anyone who knew of it, therefore, at once raised a "hue and cry" (French *huée*—a shouting), similar to the modern "Stop thief!" and the felon was followed until taken.

Peppercorn Rent.—A nominal rent of one peppercorn a year to be paid on demand, as an acknowledgment of tenancy, when lands or houses are let virtually free of rent. The usual method of acknowledging the owner's right nowadays is by paying a shilling a year.

Bureaucracy.—Literally means departmental government. In this form, as distinguished from parliamentary government, the administration of the laws is absolutely in the hands of officials organized into separate departments (bureaux), each responsible only to its own chief. Because of its natural tendency to officialdom, bureaucracy is often slightingly termed red-tapism.

See (Church).—"See" is an ecclesiastical term derived from the Latin *sedes*, meaning a seat. It

was originally the actual seat of Episcopal dignity and jurisdiction in the cathedral. But this meaning has been extended, and now applies to the city, or local centre where a church dignitary exercises his full power. See of London means that part of London within the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Bishop of London.

When the Ghost walks.—Years ago a theatrical manager of the bogus type had in his company an actor whose strong point was the ghost in *Hamlet*. If his salary was not forthcoming on a Saturday, this actor exclaimed, "Then the ghost won't walk to-night." The phrase is still used by actors on pay-day.

Scrip Certificate.—When an undertaking is floated, and stock divided among applicants, a portion of the price is paid upon allotment, and a scrip certificate, or provisional certificate given, stating number of shares, amount paid, amount still to pay, and when due. When paid up, this is exchanged for a share certificate.

Salt Gabelle.—From the French *gabelle* (tax), meaning a tax on salt. The Indian and Chinese Governments raise revenue on their salt mines by this means. The Chinese lately obtained a European loan with their salt tax as a security. The most famous "salt gabelle" was levied in France in bygone times, and abolished at the Revolution.

Bilking.—The act of eluding or cheating, perhaps derived from the word *balk*, a term first used in cribbage to signify spoiling a partner's score. Its chief meaning nowadays is the avoidance of paying cab fares by ordering cabby to wait outside some hotel or bank, and then leaving by another door.

Mumbo-Jumbo.—Mumbo-Jumbo is a god worshipped by certain negro tribes in Africa. Hideous and malignant in appearance, it is an object of peculiar horror to negro women. Such writers as Carlyle and Dickens use the word to denote any object of superstitious worship or foolish fear, and this is the generally accepted meaning nowadays. The word itself is probably an attempted English translation of the name in general use by African natives.

Meet you on the Rialto.—Venetian merchants assembled on the Rialto, a bridge over the Grand Canal, Venice, for the purpose of obtaining business information from one another, and of attending to matters concerning goods, money, and exchange. The phrase is now used to indicate a popular rendezvous.

Jingoism.—Extravagant military patriotism, favouring war, or preparedness for war ; a fighting policy adopted by the Conservative party in England in respect to foreign affairs. It was most in vogue between the years 1874 and 1880, at

which time it found favour with Lord Beaconsfield in reference to the Russo-Turkish War. In 1878 "The Great Macdermot," a music-hall artiste, popularized it in the refrain, "We don't want to fight, but by Jingo if we do!" The word is derived from "By Jingo," a corruption of St. Gengulphus, or from the Basque *jainkoa*.

A Jonah Man.—A Biblical term applied to anyone on board ship who comes to be regarded as the cause of ill-luck during the voyage. According to the Biblical story, Jonah was commanded by God to go to Nineveh and preach repentance, but, instead, he fled to Tarshish by sea. Here a storm overtook him, and he was thrown overboard by the sailors, who regarded him as the cause of the tempest.

Burked.—Burke was a notorious Irishman in Edinburgh who committed a number of murders, for which he was tried and executed in 1829. His method in each case was to suffocate his victim, so that there should be no trace of violence on the body, and then to sell the body to a doctor for dissection. Hence the name of this man has passed into common usage, and means "stifled" or "stopped"; to "burke the question" signifying "to stifle discussion by putting the question on one side."

To Turn King's Evidence.—A man implicated in

some charge may escape the consequences by giving evidence against his co-prisoners. He is then said "to turn King's evidence," because he becomes a witness for the public prosecutor or bears witness for his State or King. In return for this public service he usually receives a pardon, the view taken by the law being that a prospect of pardon encourages criminals to aid justice, in bringing home crimes to their more guilty comrades.

Bête Noir.—This French idiom has its equivalent in our English "black sheep." A black animal, whether sheep, ox, or horse, was formerly regarded by the superstitious as bearing the devil's mark, and by all as an eyesore. To-day the phrase signifies an object of aversion, generally an unwelcome acquaintance, or waster.

Court of Arches.—The oldest court of ecclesiastical appeal in England, belonging to the Archbishop of Canterbury and now held at Westminster Hall. Its name is believed to have originated from the fact that at one time it met in the old church of St. Mary-le-Bow, whose roof or steeple was supported on arches. The judge is still known as the Dean of Arches, and is the official representative of the Archbishop.

Guerilla Warfare.—*Guerilla* is a diminutive of the Spanish word *guerra*, meaning war. It de-

scribes the "little" irregular warfare conducted by inhabitants of invaded countries, particularly in mountainous districts. The practice is to harass the enemy by cutting communications, capturing convoys, and waylaying isolated detachments, petty operations which cause continual annoyance without achieving decisive results.

Mascot.—This word, common amongst French gamblers, probably came from the Portuguese *mascotto*—"witchcraft." It was first popularized by Audran's comic opera *La Mascotte*, in 1880. The belief in a mascot—a good-luck bringer—is not confined to ladies, even a hard-headed football team affecting to believe in their springbok mascot.

Quack Doctor.—All practitioners not possessing recognized medical "degrees" are liable to be so called. Commonly applied to persons falsely claiming medical skill for the sole purpose of abstracting fees from credulous patients. The "quack" doctor's habit of loudly asserting his claim in public is responsible for this association with the duck.

Turning the Tables.—To bring about a complete reversal of circumstances, such as turning a person's argument against himself. The Romans prided themselves on their tables of exquisite workmanship, which were often sold at extravagant

prices. Their wives, when accused of extravagance, would "turn the tables" by reminding them what they spent on tables.

Sub Judice.—In Latin these words literally mean "under the judge," that is, awaiting his consideration. They are used in reference to a matter in which evidence has been heard, but in which the judge's decision has not yet been given. Occasionally the term is used in a colloquial sense. Any household matter, for instance, may be described as *sub judice* when it is awaiting the decision of the family.

Chestnut (Joke).—An old joke offered as new. First used in an old melodrama, *The Broken Sword*, by Dillon. Captain Xavier was exploding an old joke about a cork tree, when Pablo interrupts: "A chestnut tree, captain." An altercation ensues, then Pablo observes: "I've heard you tell the same joke twenty-seven times; I'm sure it was a chestnut." It was further popularized in 1886 by A. Daly's company at the Strand Theatre in a play entitled *A Night Off*. In this play the heroine tells the hero that the play was found in an "old chest," to which the hero replies, "Very old—chestnut!"

Billingsgate Language.—From Billings "gate," or "quay," in London, the world's largest fish-market, established in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

"Billing" is a corruption of "bellan," to bawl or bellow; and the shouting of the fish vendors (formerly notoriously coarse and abusive) caused loud and vituperative language to be styled "Billingsgate."

Copyhold (Legal).—Copyhold is an ancient form of tenure in which the tenant has no other title-deeds than a *copy*, as the name implies, of the entry in the Court Roll of the Manor. In other respects, the exact terms on which such estates are held vary considerably in different Manors.

Bushranger.—When Australia was used as a penal settlement, escaped convicts betook themselves to the "bush," i.e. tracts of rough land covered with a scrubby growth of shrubs. Through these lands they roamed like highwaymen, maintaining themselves by preying on lonely settlers and travellers. The most notorious bushrangers were the Kelly brothers.

Single Tax.—A scheme of raising public money advanced by Henry George, an American political economist, in 1887. Its main object is to substitute for existing taxes a single tax on landowners in proportion to the value of the land they hold. It is being tried in Australia, and talked about in England.

Wool-Gathering.—Sheep in passing hedges catch their wool on the thorns, leaving tufts here and there. Years ago, country women and children

gathered these tufts, which brought so much per pound. They would wander far from home "wool-gathering." Thus the term is applied to absent-mindedness, signifying that one's wits are wandering.

Robbing Peter to pay Paul.—Originally, "Why rob St. Peter to pay St. Paul?" This question was indignantly asked when Henry VIII deprived St. Peter's, Westminster (now Westminster Abbey), of the title of cathedral which had been conferred on it ten years earlier, and sold its estates to repair St. Paul's Cathedral. The phrase, as now used, means sacrificing one interest for the advancement of another.

Munchausen.—Baron von Munchausen was born at Hanover in 1720. He became a cavalry officer, and took part in the Russian campaigns against the Turks from 1737 to 1739. His stories of adventure in hunting, war, and travel are extraordinary and amusing, but so extravagantly impossible that his name has become synonymous with gross exaggeration and reckless romance; so that to describe anything as worthy of Munchausen is to brand it as unbelievable. A collection of his tales was compiled and published in London in 1785.

Gage of Battle.—In times of chivalry, one knight challenged another to battle by casting his iron gauntlet before his opponent, who, if he took it up,

accepted thereby the challenge. This glove was the "gage," or "wager," of battle. There are frequent allusions to the practice in Shakespeare's play *King Richard II*, at which time it was much in vogue. Nowadays the words denote the final provocation to war between nations.

Ex Parte Appeal.—This is a legal term applied to an appeal made by one party when his opponents are not present. *Ex parte* are Latin words meaning "on one side only," thus signifying that the person to whom the appeal is made hears one side of the question only. Such an appeal, however, does not necessarily place the absent party at a disadvantage. It is usually conducted on sound and fair principles.

Annus Mirabilis.—Latin for "wonderful year." This expression denotes a year marked out from others by some remarkable events, such as the year 1666 in English history, which was memorable for the fire of London and for two important battles, the "North Foreland" and the "Goodwins," in which the English defeated the Dutch. Dryden has commemorated these events in his poem *Annus Mirabilis*.

Repertory Theatre.—A repertory theatre is one where a number of different plays, constituting the *répertoire*, is produced with the same staff of actors, the latter being termed a "stock company."

This is contrary to the usual theatrical practice of a new set of players for each new play.

The Submerged Tenth.—The "dregs" of society, "submerged" or sunk in extreme poverty. In *Darkest England*, William Booth, the late General of the Salvation Army, describes the homeless and friendless, to "raise" whom constituted his life's work. He estimated their number as one-tenth of the total population of Great Britain, hence the name.

Slav Races.—The Slavs cover the greater part of Eastern, South-Eastern, and Central Europe, and include, among others, the Russians, Poles, Roumanians, Bulgarians, Czechs, and Servian Croats. The term "Slav" originally meant "intelligible," and was appropriated by these peoples to distinguish themselves from foreigners whose language they did not understand.

Refreshers (Legal).—Besides the retaining-fee paid to counsel upon his acceptance of a brief, it is usual for him to receive additional payment for each day's hearing in the court if the trial lasts longer than one day. These daily fees, known as "refreshers," often amount to large sums, varying according to the reputation of the counsel engaged. The word "refresher" originally meant that the lawyer was expected to refresh his memory from time to time as to the facts of the case before him.

Spellbinder.—An Americanism which originated during the presidential election in the U.S.A. in 1888. It is applied to a public orator or lecturer who, literally speaking, holds his audience "spell-bound" by his eloquence and fervour. A spell is an utterance of mysterious power beyond human understanding, which works miraculous effects; it is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word "spell"—"a tale."

Fly in the Amber.—Amber, the fossilized resin of extinct pine trees, is sometimes found to contain a fly—caught ages ago when the resin first exuded from the bark in a soft condition, and entangled the fly's legs on its sticky surface as it settled there. Thus trapped in fly-paper fashion, fresh streams of resin slowly oozed from the bark and covered it up. The presence of a fly in amber detracts from its value; and from this is derived the everyday use of the term to denote a flaw in pleasure otherwise perfect.

Rodomontade.—Rodomont, from the Italian, meaning literally "one who rolls away mountains," was a character in Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato* and Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, two famous Italian poems dealing with the time of Charlemagne. He is represented as a very brave and fierce knight, but much addicted to boasting, whence indulgence in bragging and empty bluster is often termed "Rodomontade."

Cave (Political).—When Lowe and Horsman and their followers seceded from their party in 1866, John Bright declared that they had receded into the Cave of Adullam, referring to the Biblical account of David's place of refuge during his flight from Saul. Hence, when a party of malcontents breaks away from its leaders, a "cave," or secret political combination, is formed.

Shebeening.—A term applied, principally in Ireland and Scotland, to the surreptitious selling of intoxicating liquors on premises not licensed as required by law, thus defrauding the Inland Revenue. "Shebeen" (Gaelic for "small shop") was originally applied in Ireland to an unlicensed house or "cabin" used on the quiet for illicit trading.

A Mere Bagatelle.—"Bagatelle" is the French for bauble, trifle, or trinket; and so "a mere bagatelle" is equivalent for something—whether task or talk—which is of trifling importance, or easy of accomplishment.

Quid Pro Quo.—A Latin phrase which may be translated as "What for what," something given for something else as a sort of recompense. In law it signifies the giving of one thing for another of equal value—or the mutual consideration and performance of both parties to a contract.

Hegemony.—Ancient Greece was divided up into a number of towns which ruled themselves.

But amongst these "city states" there was generally one state, such as Athens or Sparta, which was superior to, and virtually supreme over, the others. Its superiority was known as "Hegemonia." It now signifies a power whose influence is preponderating among a number of allied Powers, as, for example, Bulgaria in the Balkans.

Talking Fustian.—Using bombastic, pretentious words. Its origin is somewhat doubtful. According to some, it is derived from the old French word *fuste*—a cask, with which "toper's or bibbler's words" may have become associated. It more probably came from "fustian," a showy kind of cotton velvet, so called because first made at Fustat, a suburb of Cairo.

Intensive Cultivation.—A method, introduced from France, of obtaining an increased production of crops without increase of space. This is secured by scientific tillage, i.e. judicious selection of manures to suit the soil, planting quickly maturing crops, and ready use of glass and other appliances. A most important feature of this system is that several crops are produced from the same piece of land in one year. It is the reverse of "extensive" farming.

Irade.—A Turkish word derived from the Arabic *irada*, meaning "will" or "desire." The most familiar use of the word to-day is in its official form,

meaning a decree of the Sublime Porte, or Government of Turkey. Its nearest equivalents are the Russian *Ukase* and the English *Order in Council*.

Merry Andrew.—One who entertains people by means of antics and buffoonery. It is generally believed that the name was first applied to a Dr. Andrew Borde, physician to Henry VIII, who had a reputation for buffoonery, and to whom various collections of jests are traditionally attributed.

Sailing the Seven Seas.—The Seven Seas are supposed to be the Pacific, Atlantic, Arctic, and Indian Oceans, and the Mediterranean, China, and North Seas. The expression itself means to navigate the globe in the pursuit of piracy or buccaneering.

Pundit.—The Sanskrit *pandita* means a learned man, especially one skilled in Hindu law, religion, and philosophy. The Supreme Court of India had a Pundit, who advised the English judges on points of Hindu law. The term is frequently applied, with mild sarcasm, to those who claim to "lay down the law." Its frequent use nowadays is probably due to Lord Macaulay, who gave prominence to the word in one of his speeches; and to his ensuing attack upon Vizetelly, the bookseller, who pirated the speech in question and, through ignorance, read "pundits" into "pandects" in the proofs.

Mute of Malice (Legal).—A prisoner who

deliberately refuses to plead to an indictment—that is, go through the usual form of defending himself against a charge—is said to stand "mute of malice." Formerly persons who thus refused to put themselves on trial were adjudged guilty; but since 1827 the law has directed a plea of "not guilty" to be entered for prisoners "mute of malice."

Moratorium.—A moratorium is a specified period, fixed by a Government, during which debtors may withhold payment of their liabilities. These "days of grace" require the passing of a "moratory" law (from the Latin *moror*, to delay). This, however, is resorted to only in extraordinary circumstances, such as an exceptionally grave financial crisis.

Pantomime.—An elaborate spectacular and musical Christmastide play, usually based on some fairy story, myth, or fable. Its modern development far transcends the meaning originally attached to the term. The Greek "pantomimos," from which the word is derived, meant simply dumb-show mimicry. In Rome it consisted of mute gesticulation and dancing. Nowadays this is replaced by a loosely constructed play, in which humorous incidents and speech are mixed up with songs and dances.

Paul Pry.—An irritating individual who interferes in another person's business. In a three-act

comedy by J. Poole, written about 1825, Paul Pry is a character with extremely meddlesome tendencies. His constant iteration was: "I hope I don't intrude!" From this character originated the apt nickname for all subsequent busybodies.

Magnum Opus.—"Magnum Opus" is a phrase used to describe the finest work or achievement of a man's life, by which he is chiefly known and remembered. For instance, "Paradise Lost" was Milton's "magnum opus"; the "Faerie Queene" was Spenser's. "Magnum opus" is Latin for "great work."

Rope of Ocnus.—Ocnus was a very industrious man whose wife was a notorious spendthrift. Owing to his association with a woman who wasted the fruit of his labour, he is represented by Pliny, and other Latin writers, as twisting a rope, which, as fast as it is made, is eaten up by an ass standing near. The expression is used proverbially to signify "Labour thrown away."

A Fit of the Blues.—A fit of the blues, or blue devils, is a colloquial expression for depression of spirits, or despondency, in allusion to the supposed depressing influence of the colour on indigo dyers. It may also be connected with demon influence, which again is associated with the blue flames of burning sulphur.

A Rough Shoot.—A term applied to the shooting over an estate which is not stocked with artificially reared game, but where the shooting depends on the natural increase of the species concerned. The expression probably arose because such shooting is more difficult than preserved shooting, the game being scarcer and wilder.

In the Arms of Morpheus.—Asleep and dreaming. Morpheus, a Greek legendary character, was son of Hypnos, Sleep, and God of Dreams. He took his name from the Greek word " morphe "—" form "—because he was supposed to fashion or form the visionary shapes that appear to us in our dreams. He is thus more strictly a creator of dreams than of sleep; but is popularly (and inaccurately) regarded as the God of Sleep.

Champerty (Legal).—When any person, not directly connected with a law case, agrees to assist the plaintiff or defendant with money to carry on the suit on condition of receiving a share of the land, debt, or other thing sued for, that person is guilty of " champerty " (from the Latin " *campi partitio* "—" division of the land "). Such bargains are illegal.

Baker's Dozen.—Heavy penalties inflicted on bakers for giving short weight induced them at one time to give one extra loaf in twelve. The thirteenth was called the " vantage loaf." Hence

a baker's dozen is used to denote good measure, just as we speak of a chatterbox talking "thirteen to the dozen," i.e. giving more than is necessary for the occasion.

Irreducible Minimum.—An irreducible minimum is a policy, or demand, relating to business or political interests, that cannot be simplified. Each party to a dispute may submit its minimum demands, which, after discussion, may be somewhat modified. But an irreducible minimum is one upon which its supporters take their final stand, and from which they will not budge. Thus the terms of an ultimatum in times of war or labour crisis may be said to embody an irreducible minimum.

Kismet.—A Moslem term signifying "fate" or "destiny." Though no part of the religious doctrines expounded in the Koran, Mohammedans use it to express their idea of an inexorable law governing human life and action. It is derived from the Turkish word "qismet," and is now used colloquially to signify the workings of "fate."

Commandeer.—From the South African Dutch "Kommanderen," to command. When the Boers were free Republics they favoured compulsory military service, and their burghers were compelled to take the field on "command." During the Transvaal war the Dutch used to commandeer, or press, unwilling men into the army and "take"

whatever they came across. Thus the word means "required by authority" in Dutch, but "open robbery" in English. To-day it means peremptory seizure, whether for military purposes or otherwise.

Pig in a Poke.—It was customary for small farmers to carry their young pigs to market in bags, or "pokes"; but a sensible buyer would not judge the animal by weight alone; he wanted to see the pig. Hence anyone disappointed in a purchase bought in a hasty, unguarded moment, is compared to buying a "pig in a poke."

A Philippic.—The "Philippics" were three bitter speeches by which Demosthenes, in the fourth century B.C., roused the Athenians against Philip, King of Macedonia. At a later date Cicero named his fourteen great orations against Antonius after those of Demosthenes. The expression, a "Philippic," has become general, even from Roman times, to signify any scathing rhetorical denunciation of an opponent.

Lost Atlantis.—Atlantis was a mythical island situated either in mid-Atlantic or just westwards of Gibraltar, and supposed to have been sunk beneath the waves by an earthquake. As the shores of Western Europe sank long before historic times the mention of this land by many old writers is probably mere fiction. Plato was the first to

allude to it ; and Bacon wrote a political romance called *The New Atlantis*. It may thus be employed in an ironical sense to signify a rogue's story of wealth abroad that turns out to be false, or a political dream that is not realised.

Read in Six Months (Parliamentary).—A Parliamentary way of politely dropping an inconvenient Bill as distinguished from a summary rejection. As the Parliamentary session seldom extended (until recently) over six months, a motion carried to read a Bill in six months' time was understood on all sides to extinguish it for the time being.

Adjourned Sine Die (Legal).—When the hearing of an action is adjourned without a day being decided upon for the further hearing, it is said to be "adjourned *sine die*," that is, "without a day," as distinguished from an ordinary adjournment until the morrow, or some fixed future day.

Nolle Prosequi (Legal).—These Latin words, meaning literally "to be unwilling to proceed," are used in English law to denote the fact that the plaintiff for some reason withdraws either a part, or the whole, of the action which he has brought, and does not intend to take further proceedings against the defendant. A written statement is necessary, declaring the withdrawal.

Way Ticket.—Way tickets are used in Germany and Switzerland to assist an honest work-seeker on

the road, and to discriminate him from the "workshy" malefactor or vagrant. A Local Government Board Committee has recommended their English adoption in book-form, setting forth men's trades, personal descriptions, destinations, and signatures.

Till all is Blue.—"Blue" is old English for dismal. In this particular phrase, however, it hints at the supposed blue sulphurous flames of the infernal regions. Strong language is considered appropriate for the same place. Hence, when anyone swears "till all is blue," he is supposed to be turning the atmosphere blue like that of the nether regions. "To make the air all round look blue" is a Western American tribute to a varied and exhaustive vocabulary.

The Home Counties.—The counties usually included in this expression are Middlesex, Kent, Essex, Hertfordshire, and Surrey, being those which are "near neighbours" of London. The world-wide importance of the great Metropolis has given birth to this phrase, which emphasises London as the national home of Englishmen.

Trial of the Pyx.—The *pyx* is a *box* kept in the Royal Mint, in which are deposited sample coins. One coin is put into the Pyx from every fifteen pounds of gold minted, and one from every sixteen pounds of silver. A jury of goldsmiths, under the

direction of the King's Remembrancer, annually test these coins to guarantee their conformation to the legal standard. This test is called the "Trial of the Pyx."

Titan.—The Titans, in Greek mythology, were demigods of great stature, children of Uranus (Heaven) and Ge, or Gaia (Earth). They were mostly hostile to the gods and friendly to mortals. Their prolonged struggle with the gods is symbolical of the conflict of the rude forces of nature with reason and order, "Titan" meaning giant brute force, and "the gods" meaning superman. The word "Titan" is used to denote any person cast in a gigantic mould, either physically or intellectually.

Pot-Boiler.—A contemptuous nickname of artistic work which is designed "to sell," as against true art, which strives to express ideals, ignoring mere business considerations. Pot-boilers sell more quickly than masterpieces, bring in more money, and thus "keep the pot boiling," that is, provide a living for the artist, musician, poet, or author, pending completion, or recognition, of his more serious and intellectual works.

Baboo English.—A Bengali who writes English is called a baboo (from the Hindu "babu," a title equivalent to our "sir," or "Mr."), but as his English education is sometimes superficial, his

composition is a medley of slang and classical language termed "baboo" English. Generally speaking, it is the production of a would-be learned, but half-educated writer.

Glebe.—The word "glebe" (Latin, *gleba*, a clod or lump of earth) is the name given to land belonging to a parish church or ecclesiastical benefice, and from which a revenue may be produced. Such "glebe-lands" are exempt from tithe duty, and sometimes form a valuable addition to the salary of the clergy. A parsonage is in Ireland called a "glebe-house."

Blowing your own Trumpet.—To sound one's own praises or to give one's self a testimonial. The allusion is to the ancient custom of heralds announcing with sound of trumpet the name and rank of knights on formal occasions. To be one's own trumpeter indicates that no one else will perform that service.

A Sop to Cerberus.—A gift to bribe a person who may prove dangerous to one's interests. Cerberus, the watch-dog guarding the infernal regions, is represented in mythology with three heads and a serpent's tail. The Greeks placed a cake in the hands of their dead as "a sop to Cerberus."

Below Par.—"Below par" (from the Latin, *par*, equal) commercially means that the price of some stock has fallen in the market below its

nominal value. It is also used as descriptive of anything not up to the standard, and of a man's health, when he is feeling "not quite up to the mark."

Rare and Refreshing Fruit.—While the provisions of the National Health Insurance Act were still awaiting discussion in Parliament, Mr. Lloyd George, waxing enthusiastic in a platform speech, described its prospective benefits to the working classes as "rare and refreshing fruit." The phrase, from its persistent ironical application by his opponents, has become famous.

Flash Point.—Inflammable liquids are perfectly safe if kept below a certain temperature. But some liquids, such as household paraffin, stand a higher temperature than others, such as benzine. The temperature at which evaporation ensues, causing the liquid to ignite on a light being applied, is known as "flash point." The minimum legal flash point in Great Britain is 73° Fahrenheit.

Pilot Engine.—A light locomotive engine sent along the line about fifteen minutes before a train. The object is to clear the "road" or see that everything is right where repairs may have been taking place on the "permanent way." A pilot is used more especially as a precursor to a train conveying Royalty or other great personages.

Ticket of Leave.—The licence granted to prison-

ers who, on account of their good behaviour, are released before the expiration of their sentence. Should the holder become guilty of misdemeanour, or fail to report himself to the police, the ticket of leave is cancelled and the remainder of the sentence must be served.

The Vulgar Tongue.—"Vulgar" here means "common" or "ordinary," and has no reference to vulgarity or rudeness. The "vulgar tongue" is therefore the ordinary language of the common people, that is, taken as a class or body (Latin, *vulgaris*, from *vulgus*, the multitude), as distinguished from the "higher-flown" language of the more educated.

Thespian.—A term used to denote an actor who particularizes in drama or tragedy. Thespis, a Greek poet, who lived in the sixth century B.C., is commonly supposed to have originated the modern drama; hence followers of the dramatic profession are styled Thespians, and the drama itself the Thespian art.

Three Acres and a Cow.—A descriptive term applied to a smallholding, although legally a smallholding may vary in extent from over one acre up to fifty acres. The decline of agriculture in England began to cause uneasiness in public-spirited men more than thirty years ago. In January, 1886, Mr. Jesse Collings, Unionist M.P.,

took an active part in recommending smallholdings to the Government. His plan was derisively referred to in the Press as "three acres and a cow," and the phrase is now inseparably associated with him. Since 1886 the smallholdings movement has assumed great dimensions, and "three acres and a cow" is no longer a gibe, but a weighty problem.

All Gas and Gaiters.—Originally "all is gaiety and gladness." Said of anyone whose outlook for the moment is so happy that nothing seems lacking. Gas is symbolical of full-blown talk, and gaiters of appearance that defies criticism. Charles Dickens used the phrase in *Nicholas Nickleby*. Mrs. Nickleby was loved by a half mad gentleman neighbour who courted her over the garden wall. One day, on seeing Mrs. Nickleby, he says, "She is come at last—at last—and all is gas and gaiters!"

Let her Rip.—Allow her to go as fast as she chooses and chance it; usually applied to fast motoring. Originated on the Mississippi and other American rivers, when rival steamboats first were established. Captains in jealous competition would put on every ounce of steam to keep ahead. Sometimes the boiler would burst, or "rip" apart. Thus "let her rip" came to be an expression of dogged tenacity of purpose when anyone ventured

to try and persuade the captain to lower the steam pressure.

Dog Days.—During summer, especially from July 3rd to August 11th, Sirius, the Dog Star, rises and sets in the daytime instead of at night. The period of this rising and setting by day is known as the Dog Days. The ancients reckoned their dog days to be forty in number—twenty before, and twenty after, the rising of the star. As the star rose abroad at the hottest and most pestilential time of the year, it was regarded as a precursor of trouble. Sirius is the most brilliant of all the fixed stars in the sky, but not quite as bright as the planets Venus and Jupiter.

A Black Frost.—During intense cold, if a dry air or breeze happens to prevail, there is no deposit of white frost upon the ground. The landscape then wears a slightly blackened aspect due to the deadening effect of the cold upon grass and other winter foliage. Black frosts are erroneously thought to be more severe than white ones. The great frosts of February, 1895, when zero was reached, were white; so that, strictly speaking, a frost is black because the air is too dry, or too breezy, to allow of any deposit. White frost, like dew, settles best in a calm.

Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.—From the French "Liberté, egalité, et fraternité," the watchwords

of the rebellious citizens during the French Revolution of 1791. They are the outcome of the doctrine first set forth by the philosopher Hobbes, that "all men are equal." This doctrine was further expounded in the American Declaration of Independence of July 4th, 1776. It is a socialistic view and has many disciples of all classes at the present day.

A Silver Thaw.—In some regions, such as England and Newfoundland, a period of severe frost passes away so suddenly that rainy conditions set in while the temperature of the ground is still well below freezing point. For instance, the clouds may register 50°, while the earth still registers 20°. Rain falls from the mild air current above, and on touching the ground turns to solid ice. If this continues, the roads and paths, and even the trees, become clothed, giving the landscape a silvery look. Silver thaws seldom last for more than a few hours.

Assets Nursing Committee.—When a company or society is in financial difficulties, but does not wish to liquidate, or wind up, the working committee resigns, not wishing to incur any more expenses, since, by so doing, they would further deprive shareholders of their money. A committee is then appointed to "nurse" the assets, i.e. watch over them like patients in hospital, until some-

thing happens which puts the company either on a sounder and healthier footing, or renders a wind-up, or death, inevitable.

A Deep Depression.—A term used by weather experts for a "storm centre" or area of bad weather more extensive than the depressions which most often visit this country. The barometer announces their arrival by falling below 29·50, and tempestuous weather follows. Depressions bring windy, unsettled weather, and anticyclones bring calm and fine weather.

Sleeping Partner.—One who has invested his money in a business without taking an active part in its management. Such a person generally enjoys great personal benefit, but at the same time is apt to become a drag upon the earning capacities of the working partners. He shares, however, in the losses as well as the profits, thereby incurring the responsibilities of a working partner.

Hitting the Nail on the Head.—A figurative expression signifying that one has done exactly the right thing at the right moment, or spoken to the point, or clinched matters. Often wrongly rendered into "hitting the *right* nail on the head." In carpentry the amateur, when using the hammer, is more apt to miss the nail and strike wood than to hit the wrong one. The phrase thus implies that one has hit a mark that is often missed.

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